

A Gender Variance Who's Who

Essays on trans, intersex, cis and other persons and topics from a trans perspective.....All human life is here.

This site is the most comprehensive on the web devoted to trans history and biography. Well over 1400 persons worthy of note, both famous and obscure, are discussed in detail, and many mentioned in passing.

There is a detailed **Index** arranged by vocation, doctor, activist group etc. There is also a **Place Index** arranged by City etc. This is still evolving.

In addition to this most articles have one or more labels at the bottom. Click one to go to similar persons. There is a full list of labels at the bottom of the right-hand sidebar. There is also a sidebar on the left. Enjoy exploring!

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06 May 2023

Donald A Wollheim/Darrell G Raynor (1914-1990) science fiction writer and editor, trans memoirist - Part 1

(writing as Darrell Raynor, Wollheim invariably used male pronouns for other transvestites, and this will be taken as his choice of pronoun)

(All page references to *A Year Among the Girls* (AYAG) are to the 1968 Lancer Book edition)

A life-long New Yorker, Donald Wollheim discovered science fiction at the age of 13 in 1927 with Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing*. In 1934 his first story was published in Gernsback's *Wonder Stories*, and as per Gernsback's usual practice he was not paid. He found other unpaid authors and they sued.

In 1936 he organized what was later deemed to be the first science fiction convention when a New York group met with a Philadelphia group in the latter city. In 1937 he founded the Fantasy Amateur Press Association; in 1938 he was a co-founder of the *Futurians*, a Marxist-influenced SF fan group that included many who would later become well-known SF writers. Over the next couple of decades Wollheim became a moderately successful SF author (sometimes using pseudonyms: Allen Zweig, David Grinnell, Millard Verne Gordon, Martin Pearson), but more significantly as an editor and publisher. In 1943, after a long courtship, he married fellow Futurian **Elsie Balter**.

From 1947 he was an editor at the pioneering paperback publisher **Avon Books**. In 1951 the Wollheims had a daughter, Elizabeth or **Betsy**. A year later Donald joined the new publisher **Ace Books** as an editor. Among the writers who debuted at Ace were Philip K. Dick, Samuel R. Delany, Leigh Brackett, Ursula K. Le Guin and John Brunner. He published William S. Burroughs' *Junkie*, and reprinted Edgar Rice Burroughs' tales of Tarzan and of Mars, and brought out the paperback version of Frank Herbert's *Dune*.

By the end of the 1950s he was at the top of his trade, was flying back and forth across the US, and his father had a stroke and became his son's responsibility.

"... deep down, I hated him. This was a concealed hatred, as such things usually are, but it was a deep, thoroughly entrenched part of my whole social attitude. [AYAG: 16-17]

He continued:

"I have a theory that most tranvestites are father haters; that most homosexuals are mother haters. I do not equate transvestism with homosexuality for this reason." [AYAG:17]

By December 1961 Wollheim was building to a nervous break-down:

"Underneath, in the springs of my subconscious, new forces were thrusting through. I felt the sap of my masculinity rising to higher pitches than ever before. I became intensely aware of women, more so than ever was normal to me before. My sexual fantasies began to shape themselves into sharper forms, more violent. More vivid.

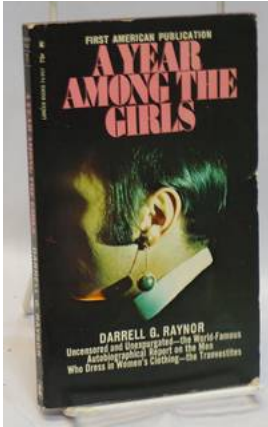
I thought about transvestism. I became actively curious about it. Were there really such people? What were they like? Did they see things as I did?

There is a literature of transvestism, but it is limited, rare, and not very satisfactory. There are nasty little stores on Main Street in Los Angeles and 42nd Street in New York that sometimes have little booklets that touch on the subject. ...

I think that the nervous breakdown became extreme in December. It grew more manifest in January. In that month, two things occurred. I saw a copy of a real transvestite magazine in a store in New York, and a curious Canadian newspaper found its way into my hands."

[AYAG: 17-18]

He tells us that:



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"The fantasy generally took the form of imagining myself being forced to such clothing as punishment for some imaginary misdemeanor. That was how my mind got around the shame of desire. ... transvestism was a buried stream throughout the greater part of my life. A few hasty experiments now and then when opportunity coincided with lust." [AYAG:15]

He had also discovered, in certain bookstores on 42nd St, a few illustrated booklets featuring petticoat punishment created by a writer generally referred to as [Nan Gilbert](#). In 1960 Gilbert had had his mail stopped and was fined \$500. Wollheim nevertheless contacted Gilbert, and they corresponded for some time.

In March 1962 Wollheim, in Los Angeles on business, having previously corresponded, met first [Virginia Prince](#) in his hotel room, and then was invited to dinner with Virginia and wife Doreen. He was chauffeured to the Prince's home by Robert Stevens/Barbara Ellen, previously the manager of a radio station back east, who was also a business associate of Prince (AYAG: chp 1-4). After an interesting evening, it was suggested that in New York Darrell should contact Gail and Susanna who were listed in *Transvestia*. He also bought the complete back file of *Transvestia*.

Back home, the first task was to tell Mrs Wollheim. This was done in stages and accomplished after 10 days, and a few days after that they went shopping together on 5th Avenue for feminine nightwear.

Darrell also wrote letters to Gail and to Susanna. The former had to go via Prince/*Transvestia* in Los Angeles, and therefore took longer to get a response. [Susanna](#) had published contact details in *Transvestia*, and could be contacted directly. A letter from Susanna arrived quickly, but an actual meeting – for one reason or another – took several months. It was early April, two weeks later, before a letter arrived from [Gail](#), but it gave a phone number, and Wollheim was able to visit the next evening, had a heart-to-heart chat and was given gossip about New York transvestites.

Nan Gilbert – who had been active among transvestites at an earlier date, and had also been a business man – gave advice not to contact persons such as Gail and Susanna, in that they were frustrated persons who would be disappointing. On the other hand, Wollheim and Gail met a few times for lunch. In May Gail's move to an apartment in Greenwich Village was complete and Wollheim attended a small party where Gail was the only person in female clothing. Gilbert was mentioned, and known by those who were present. Later when Wollheim sent regards to Gilbert from 'Alice from Canada', a reference to one in attendance, Gilbert became curt, and the correspondence was soon discontinued.

Wollheim had business in the Pacific northwest, and wrote to Annette, in Idaho, who had been the cover girl on *Transvestia* #5, and was duly welcomed. Annette, an engineer and mechanic, lived outside the city, oscillated openly with a wife, two children and a mother, and openly transvested with friends and neighbors and even members of the city council.

The social functions at Gail's were on most evenings. Wollheim met more of Gail's acquaintances, and heard tell of [Siobhan](#), who was doing a science PhD, was editor of a science journal and was one of the most successful transvestites in the city.

On the 4th July, Mrs Wollheim also attended the soiree at Gail's. This was the first time that they met 'Fiona from New Zealand' (actually [Katherine Cummings](#) from Australia). A few weeks later the Wollheims visited 'Fiona' in Toronto where she was taking a librarian studies degree.

In September, after having been stood up twice by Susanna, and not until then met her, Wollheim phoned to ascertain that she was at home and went straight round. They talked and got on, and Wollheim agreed to attend the Halloween weekend meeting at the Chevalier D'Eon cottage that Susanna and wife owned in upstate New York, the second year that Virginia Prince was to attend – coming all the way from Los Angeles.

Come Halloween, the Wollheims drove up on the Saturday morning. For the first time Wollheim appeared in female dress – for the after-dinner party. Most of the persons that he had met at Gail's were there as was [Virginia Prince](#), and 'Fiona' from Toronto and her flat mate. And psychologists Hugo Beigel and Wardell Pomeroy – who did not cross-dress. [Harry Benjamin](#) had also been invited but did not arrive. The Wollheims invited Annette and Virginia and their wives to visit in New York the next day.

In December Wollheim and wife attended a party at Susanna's New York apartment.

In the early months of 1963, Wollheim, being a professional writer and editor, began to consider putting his feelings and experiences of the past year onto paper, especially as the near mental-breakdown of the year before had passed as he had accepted what he really was, and something like normality had been recovered. As preparation for the writing, he intended to attend a meeting of Virginia's Hose and Heels Club while in Los Angeles. He had heard that Barbara Ellen, Prince's business partner was on the out, as was Evelyn, another close associate. Wollheim wrote to Prince asking to attend the Club meeting, but it took three weeks before an answer came, and the answer took umbrage with a piece of doggerel that Wollheim had innocently sent when requesting that any photographs of him not be published. Wollheim had also been corresponding with [Barbara-Jean](#), vice president of the Hose and Heels Club. Prince forbade attendance at the meeting, but did agree to meet with him, but only on the condition that he not contact Barbara Ellen, Evelyn or Barbara Jean.

The first night in Los Angeles, Wollheim went to dinner with Prince and wife, and afterwards back to Prince's home where he heard Prince's side of the dispute, which he initially accepted. However two days later he was having second thoughts and phoned Barbara Jean, which led to dinner and an invitation to a party on Friday night where he met all three of the ex-communicants. Evelyn invited Wollheim to breakfast on Sunday morning before his flight home. Prince had also proposed Sunday morning breakfast, but then cancelled it after hearing that Wollheim had attended the party.

Continued in [Part II](#).

"copy of a real transvestite magazine in a store in New York, and a curious Canadian newspaper found its way into my hands". December 1961. The magazine was of course *Transvestia*, and the Canadian newspaper *Justice Weekly*. Peter Farrer published an excellent book on the latter in 2011: *Cross Dressing since the War: Selections from Justice Weekly 1955-1972*.

Time: [09:35](#) 

Labels: [FPE-TriEss](#), [publisher](#), [science fiction](#)

1 comment:

 [Sarah-Wade](#) 6/5/23 18:46

This was, well, fascinating. I was a big science-fiction fan as a teenager and I'm pretty sure I read a couple of Donald A. Wollheim's juveniles back the. I certainly read a bunch of books he edited and published.

And then again, *A Year Among The Girls* was pretty much the first book on trans issues I ever found or got to read, so it was pretty important to me. How surprising to find that both the author of the book and the publisher of some my favorite s-f books were the same person is pretty...awesome. Incidentally, someone uploaded the documentary movie *Casa Susanna* to YouTube a couple weeks ago. Two of the people interviewed were Donald Wollheim's daughter and Susanna Valenti's step-grandson.

I mention the later as a bit of an update. Susanna's article on this website says that she dropped out of the community and her final date is unknown.

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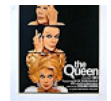
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08 May 2023

Donald A Wollheim/Darrell G Raynor - Part II

Continued from [Part I](#).

In 1963, Susanna and Marie sold their resort property as it was unprofitable. In early 1964 they bought another 150 acre property with a large house, again in the Catskills, close to Hunter, New York. This became *Casa Susanna*, and like the *Chevalier D'Eon Resort* was frequented by the transvestite crowd. Susanna and her guests would go, dressed, to drive-in movies and to friendly neighbours. Some transvestite visitors even went into the village of Hunter for shopping, where, if nothing else, they were noted for being overdressed.

Wollheim became a regular at Casa Susanna and used the name Donna or Doris. He did not drive and so Elsie chauffeured him. The daughter Betsy was sent to summer camp every year for two months for 8 years to avoid awkward questions. In 1964 he announced that he was going out for Halloween as his sister, and spent five hours in the bathroom getting ready – even at age 12 Betsy realized that this was odd.

Siobhan Fredericks in New York, who had quit Virginia Prince's FPE, started a competing magazine, *Turnabout*, of which the first issue came out June 1963. It made fun of the many femme* words that Prince had coined, and attracted cross-dressers who were critical of Prince and her ideas. Fredericks also started a support group in her home, to which Harry Benjamin sent some of his patients, including Renée Richards. Wollheim joined the editorial staff, and wrote articles for *Turnabout* using the pseudonym 'D. Rhodes'.

In Issue #1 D. Rhodes contributed "How to write a TV story". It mocked the genre but assumed that 'TV story' = forced femininity. He also reviewed the Nan Gilbert booklets – four had been published at that date. He wrote that such 'petticoat-punishment' was 'calculated to grip the fantasies of most transvestites'. He also contributed 'Turntable', an assemblage of bits and pieces from newspapers to the early issues.

In Issue #3 he wrote "Overs and Unders" in which he proposes two kinds of male heterosexual transvestites, of both of which he says: "Virtually all recorded cases of transvestism begin as fetishism which demands not only visual or tactile contact with the fetish object but also the actual wearing of it". The 'Overs' first fixate on shoes, the 'Unders' first fixate on under garments. " ... the Over is not greatly concerned with his physical surroundings, especially in his living quarters. The dainty details of feminine life hold no great fascination for him and he is likely to be indifferent to any feminine touches in his surroundings. The Under is more likely to be sensitive to suggestions of femininity all about him, such as color and texture. He is quite often more retiring as an individual and not as bold or aggressive as the Over." ... "It is possible that the Over's career interests tend toward the mechanical arts, the applied sciences, artisan skills, or manual labor. The Under is more likely to be the intellectual worker, the creative artist, the practitioner of one of the more abstract professions, or a worker in some area which would follow logically from his original preoccupation with the unseen as a basis for his imagination. Getting in somewhat deeper, it occurs to me that Overs tend toward the schizoid personality pattern, to include in their ranks the dual-personality types of TV, and to trend more toward homosexuality and transsexualism. On the other hand, the Unders tend toward the manic-depressive pattern, more often become sado-masochistic and melancholic, perhaps even suicidal."

In Issue #4 he wrote a fantasy of "the year that transvestism caught on" and how the fashion dictated clothing for men and women was reversed.

In Issue #5 Dr Hugo Beigel provided a short article restating the professional opinion that transvestism was not intersex, was a personality disorder and therapy was available. Siobhan Fredericks replied. Shelagh Niles, who often wrote for *Transvestia*, replied to Rhodes' article on "Overs and Unders", partly agreeing, partly adjusting. The same issue contained a short TV fiction by [David Grinnell](#), a pseudonym that Wollheim had previously used for *Destination Saturn* and *Edge of Time*.

In 1965, editor Wollheim arranged for Ace Books to publish Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. He believed that the copyright was invalid because the Houghton Mifflin edition had been bound using pages printed in Britain for the hardcover edition there. By US copyright law the text was therefore public domain in the US. The Ace edition was the first US paperback edition of Tolkien's work. However Ballantine Books soon after published an authorized paperback edition with some minor revisions to renew the copyright, and this became the preferred edition for Tolkien fans.

A Year among the Girls, Wollheim's memoir of his exploration of the transvestite scene, was published in 1966 by the adventurous publisher [Lyle Stuart](#). Wollheim was of course practised with using pseudonyms, and the book was published as by Darrell G Raynor, but not as by D. Rhodes which would have connected the book to his articles in *Turnabout*. The book was reprinted as a Lancer paperback in 1968.

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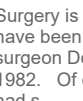
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
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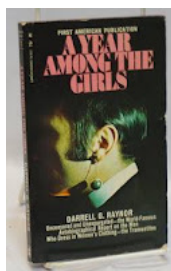
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Presumably Virginia Prince was not pleased with the book as it sympathized with those who had split from her organizing. Sheila Niles, presumably with Prince's agreement, reviewed the book in *Transvestia*, #38.

"In this autobiographical account, the author makes a very serious effort to explore and explain the TV world as he saw it from March 1962 to March 1963. He is an excellent observer and a skilled writer, and it is unfortunate that his viewpoint (more fetishist than TV by his own account) is such as to make his interpretations miss the mark. The good public image of the TV, so carefully built up in the text, is almost completely destroyed by the last chapter - where the author suddenly loses his objectivity and becomes both petulant and spiteful."

Turnabout #6, Winter 1966, contains D Rhodes' essay "A random factor in transvestism", a follow-up to his "Overs and Unders" in Issue #3. After feedback from readers, and reported variations: "One individual would say that he believes himself to be an Under but that he has already adopted and mastered many of the techniques of the Over. On the other hand, an Over will be found to show an interest in the fantasies and preferences of the Under, such as frilly nightgowns and an emphasis on the color pink." He discusses the impact of a random factor: "The random factor we find here is the measure of closeness to the conscious mind of

the thought that life would be better if one had been of the opposite sex ... in the Over, this thought is much closer to the surface of the mind, is often quite clearly a conscious desire, and the drive is exerted toward attempting to achieve the impossible".

In the same issue, Siobhan Fredericks reviewed *A Year Among the Girls*, and was very positive:

"This reviewer can say without reservation that this book is the most important study of transvestism to have been published in many years. And in terms of its potential for increasing public understanding of the transvestite's milieu, it is the single most important work ever published. In fast-moving reportorial style, the book presents a sympathetic -- but nonetheless analytical -- "inside" view of the TV phenomenon in terms which the average non-TV reader can readily comprehend and accept.

The author, who happens to be a member of the staff of this magazine, charts out his personal experiences during a single year -- June 1963 to June 1964 [sic] -- in which he first "came out of the closet" and made contact with the TV community so well known to the readers of *TURNABOUT* and *TRANVESTIA*. The events which took place and the personalities which he encountered are thoroughly detailed, as are the effects which these individuals and events had on his own life.

The most amazing thing about *A YEAR AMONG THE GIRLS* is the accuracy of the author's reportage."



In *Turnabout* Issue #7, Summer 1966, D Rhodes contributed "In the literature of Transvestism". He restricts his survey to "literature written especially for transvestically-inclined readers -- and not stories where some-one or other, in order to advance the plot, finds it necessary to don feminine clothing. Such stories are really not TV literature, although it may have some entertainment value for TVs". He starts with the legendary *Miss High Heels*, and mainly sticks to forced femininity tales. Ironically he ignores the then newly published *I Want What I Want* by Geoff Brown, which is positively reviewed elsewhere in the same issue.

In the same issue Siobhan Fredericks wrote about the reception of AYAG:

"DISSENSION IN THE RANKS

One can't help but be amused at the antic behavior of our FPE [Virginia Prince's term Full Personality Expression -- a term used for her national group which had absorbed the *Hose and Heel Club*] friends and note the way it varies from the official party line as handed down from the Valhalla heights by the male sorority's house organ and fountainhead, *TRANVESTIA*. It's refreshing to observe that FPE's attempts to standardize TVism fail so dismally despite stern manifestos and dogmatic directives from on high. Dissension appears rampant among FPEers, and we applaud the rebels for hanging onto their individuality and common sense.

A case in point is the review of Darrell Raynor's *A YEAR AMONG THE GIRLS* which appeared in a recent *TRANVESTIA*, ostensibly authored by FPE Field Commissioner Sheila Niles, who intended to bestow the kiss of death on the book -- a book which we lesser mortals view as the greatest thing to happen to TVism since someone thought of cross-dressing. Said Commissar Niles of the book: 'It's petulant and spiteful.'"

This followed by positive but anonymous quotes from various FPE office holders.

In 1968 Gail's male persona met and started dating the film star *Joan Bennett*, and thus disengaged from the transvestite scene.

Also that year, A A Wyn, the owner of Ace Books died, and the company was purchased by a consortium headed by a bank, that had almost no publishing experience. The bills and the authors were not paid, and Wollheim spent most of the time reacting to this rather than publishing books -- so he left in 1971. Donald and Elsie founded *DAW Books* (from his initials). DAW Books was the first mass market specialist science fiction and fantasy fiction publishing house. Most of the writers whom he had developed at Ace went with him to DAW. DAW books were distributed by New American Library. However the NAL objected to *Thomas Burnett Swann's How Are the Mighty Fallen*, 1974, because of its foregrounding of the Biblical Jonathan and David as gay lovers. (reviews). Wollheim had to fight vigorously to get it released.

Betsy became an associate editor of DAW Books in 1975, and took over the management in 1985.

Donald died in 1990; in 1994 Elsie facing surgery told their daughter everything about her father's secretive cross-dressing, showing her the AYAG book and boxes of photographs.

Elsie died in 1996

Betsy sold DAW Books in 2022, but continues to work there.

In 2022 Betsy spoke movingly and at length about her father's cross-dressing and Elsie's support in the documentary *Casa Susanna*.

digitaltransgenderarchive.net does not have *Turnabout* #8 and #9 which probably have contributions from D Rhodes -- but I was unable to consult them. #10, "back in circulation again after so long, - six years, almost", does not mention either D Rhodes or Siobhan Fredericks, and consists mainly of a long rambling (27 pages) anonymous essay. From then on it is a rather different publication.

The best survey of trans literature is of course Peter Farrer's *In Female Disguise*, Karn Publications, 1992, which includes excerpts from books by authors from Thomas Mallory to Walter Scott to Mark Twain to Conan Doyle. It is a pity that Wollheim never did a survey of trans science fiction -- which he

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Popular Posts -

presumably could well have done. Back at the end of the previous century there was a long list on the internet of trans SF. I think that I found it on [alt.transgendered](#). What did happen to that?

AYAG:16 Raynor describes himself as "the father of teenagers". However only one, Betsy, is mentioned in anything that I read, and she, being born in 1951, was not yet teenaged.

The Unders and Overs dichotomy probably has a place in the [pre-history of AGP/HSTS](#). I wonder if either Freund or Blanchard ever read the proposal and thought that they could do better.

While Wollheim did publish William Burroughs and did go to bat for the gay content in [Thomas Burnett Swann's How Are the Mighty Fallen](#), he does blot his copybook with a few queer-phobic comments – although not as badly as say [Betty Cowell](#) :

p22 Before the first meeting with Prince, Wollheim notes that Prince is not: "the kind of person I have always bristled at, resented, disliked in the same way that any normal man tends to bristle at the flagrant faggot."

p30 On first meeting Prince (male persona), Wollheim notes: "I had looked for evidence of effeminacy, and had not found much".

p47 On first meeting Gail, Wollheim notes: "His voice was deep and masculine. No Faggot this."

Shelagh or Sheila Niles? She herself equivocated.

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The Donald Wollheim bibliography as SF writer and as SF editor is enormous, and cannot be repeated here. The items below refer to his life and to his involvement with transvesting.

For his professional bibliography see [ISFDB](#) and [SFE](#).

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- Mark Asch. "Casa Susanna (TIFF 2022)". *Screen Slate*, September 12th [Online](#).
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- Peter Farrer. *Cross Dressing since the War: Selections from Justice Weekly 1955-1972*. Karn Publications, 2011.



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The copyright on *A Year Among the Girls* was held by Lyle Stuart – perhaps to protect Wollheim’s identity.

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Time: 11:12

Labels: newsletter, publisher, science fiction

4 comments:



Ophelia 15/5/23 14:11

Sheila Niles suggest that Raynor was 'more fetishist than TV by his own account'. Given the repeated concern with forced femininity/petticoat punishment (in the writing of D. Rhodes also) such a conclusion is inevitable. I would have liked more information about what Raynor did after 1966. The above account implies that Raynor took only a couple of steps on the journey to womanhood - and was content to stay at that point. ?

What did happen to Turnabout after the mid-1960s? Has nobody documented this?

Thank you Zagria for connecting Raynor and D Rhodes. Nobody else seems to have noticed the connection.

Reply



Zagria 16/5/23 09:45

Here is Virginia Prince's account of Raynor on her autobiography in Transvestia #100:

The person known to some of you as Darrel Raynor, was also D. Rhodes, and Quiven Enright and probably several other pseudonym s and who eventually wrote "A Year Among the girls" in 1966, was the associate editor and a force behind the anti-Virginia movement. He had come to Los Angeles (as related in "A Year Among ...") and met me and Barbara and then had returned a couple of years later after the New York convention where he had gotten to know a lot of TVs across the country and had been here just at the height of the big schism, so he had a lot of juicy, though one sided, scandal to peddle in New York. As a result, starting with No. 3 of Turnabout, there were all kinds of insults, direct criticisms, a number of untruths, and snide remarks about me, and everything I did or stood for. A couple of years later Sioban admitted to a mutual friend that she had started Turnabout to "get at" Virginia but that it had been successful enough that it looked as though it could stand on its own. It did ... for seven or eight issues and then died out. It had a reincarnation a couple of years later for two or more issues and then vanished com pletely. (p51, 54)

Reply



joannaS 31/5/23 07:12

The spectrum of human behaviour is so wide that we have trouble encompassing it under labels and so we have gone through terminologies over the decades to try and describe it. It is why I have trouble with the idea of umbrellas or communities when no two people are alike. Yes, we can talk about groupings of similarities but that is all. If a behaviour is possible it will exist

Reply

Trish Mifflin 14/6/23 19:31

Zagria, this is one of the most amazing pieces of writing about TG/GNC/NB history I've read in a long time. I've heard of the book "A Year Among the Girls," but that was all. Everything else here was a revelation to me.

You always do amazing work, but this (both 1 and 2) was just incredible. Thank you.

P.S.: I hope someone is archiving your blog as a permanent reference.

Reply



Enter comment

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See also: Flawles Rachel Harlow ar Queen' Richard F raised in South P and bullied at sch



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The Historical Roots of Casa Valentina

Posted on May 10, 2014 in [Arts](#) | [6 comments](#)



The Historical Roots of Harvey Fierstein's *Casa Valentina*

By Dallas Denny

***Casa Valentina*. A play by Harvey Fierstein. Directed by Joe Mantello. Samuel J. Friedman Theatre, 261 W. 47th Street, NY, NY**



Harvey Fierstein's *Casa Valentina*

In the early 1960s small groups of crossdressers were meeting clandestinely on the East and West coasts of the United States. In Los Angeles they gathered in the living room of early activist Virginia Prince. In New York they drove to the Catskills with the trunks of their cars filled with female attire. Their destination: The Chevalier d'Eon Resort, which would soon be renamed Casa Susanna.



Everybody Gets Into the Act

Casa Susanna was a semi-dilapidated resort complex in Hunter, New York; it was purchased by Marie Valenti, who owned a wig shop in Manhattan and was the second wife of a Cuban-American crossdresser named—you guessed it—Susanna. Susanna's male name was Tito. Guests would arrive in suits and ties but would soon change into cocktail dresses and sweater sets to begin a weekend as the women most of them wished they were.



One of those crossdressers was a young person who called herself Andrea Susan. Thanks to an older group member named Dick, who bought her an enlarger and photo developing equipment, she was the group's official

photographer. Andrea took formal and informal pictures of the attendees, singly and in groups, and developed them at her home in Westchester County.



A Young Andrea Susan

Because they provided instant gratification and didn't require frightened crossdressers to rely on professional developers who might out them or call the police, Polaroid's instant cameras were popular with Casa Susanna's temporary residents. Andrea was even more popular. Her photographs were of far higher quality than Polaroids and besides, she was family. Unlike the clerk at the corner drugstore, she could be trusted with images that, if seen by the wrong people, could destroy lives.

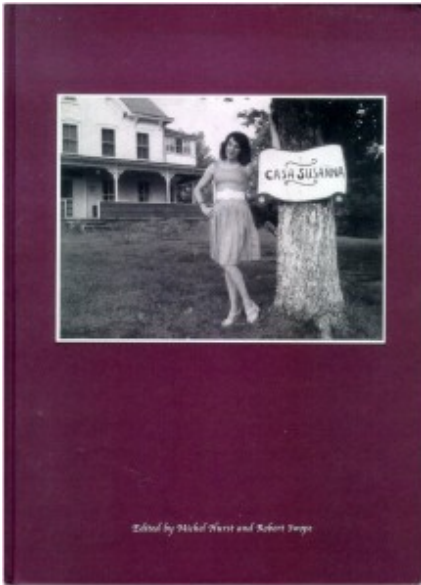


Susanna Valenti

Andrea dutifully turned over the negatives to her mentor—but when he married a disapproving movie star he threw his prints and negatives into his garbage can. Someone obviously picked them up, for they surfaced decades later in a bin at a Manhattan flea market. When Robert Swope, “a gentle punk rocker turned furniture dealer,” came across more than one hundred images of women who appeared to have male bodies, he was transfixed.

He knew nothing about their stories, or Casa Susanna, beyond the obvious: here was a group of men dressed as women, beautiful and homely, posing with gravity, happiness, and in some cases outright joy. They were playing cards, eating dinner, having a laugh. They didn't look campy, like drag queens vamping it up as Diana Ross or Cher; they looked like small-town parishioners, like the lady next door, or your aunt in Connecticut (Green, 2006).

Swope bought every photo he could find.



Cover, Casa Susanna

Without understanding exactly what had been happening up in the Catskills, Swope and partner Michel Hurst assembled the images into a book named *Casa Susanna*, which was published in 2005 by Powerhouse. Penelope Green's September 7, 2006 review in the *The New York Times* brought widespread attention to the book.

In a March 11 interview on WQXR Radio, Tony Award Winning playwright and actor Harvey Fierstein told interviewer Elliot Forrest he had been aware of Casa Susanna as a child, when his family vacationed in the Catskills—but he was more interested in the nudist colony that was just across the street than in the men who dressed as women. However, when producer Colin Callender urged Fierstein to write a play about Casa Susanna, he agreed to look into it—and the more he learned, the more interested he became.

The result was Fierstein's *Casa Valentina*, which is now playing on Broadway at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre. Directed by Joe Mantello, its cast consists of actors Reed Birney, John Cullum, Gabriel Ebert, Lisa Emery, Tom McGowan, Patrick Page, Larry Pine, Nick Restrate, and Mare Winningham. *Casa Valentina* has been nominated for best play of the year for the Tony Awards.



Cast, Casa Valentina

Reviewers have tended to call Fierstein's play preachy, but have been positive about the performances by the cast. I saw Casa Valentina on April 30th. Here's my review, of sorts, if you can find it, buried as it is amongst my discussion of the real-life events that somehow turned into a Broadway show.

I have to call a spoiler warning here. I'll be discussing the crisis at the center of the play, and that will of necessity mean revealing the plot to some extent. So ready now, let's all say it together: SPOILER WARNING!

Casa Valentina is set in 1962 and is based upon actual events. The character Charlotte (who is clearly based upon the late Virginia Prince) has come to the resort with a purpose—she wants to form a national organization for crossdressers, and she has a definite idea about who should and should not be allowed to participate.

In actuality, Virginia Prince did come to Casa Susanna in 1962, and organizing was in fact on her mind. In a photo in *Casa Susanna*, she can be seen sitting at a dining table with the Catskills' finest (the photo was taken and developed by Andrea, who told me a hat had been passed at a previous get-together to finance Virginia's trip). Virginia was hoping to turn her Los Angeles-based Hose and Heels Club into a national organization called Full Personality Expression; to do that, she needed the support of crossdressers on the East Coast—in other words, the crew at Casa Susanna.



Dinner at Casa Susanna. That's Virginia Prince in the left foreground, wearing a white sweater

In 1962 Virginia was in her third year as publisher of *Transvestia*, her nationally-circulated magazine for crossdressers. It was, in fact, networking by crossdressers associated with the magazine which had led to the formation of Casa Susanna and the Hose and Heels Club. She was asking much of the closeted crossdressing men of Casa Susanna: shed your anonymity, she told them. Take some risk. Let's take our identities and our demands for acceptance public. For the closeted ladies at Casa Susanna, it was a scary proposition.



Virginia Prince

Virginia (as does Charlotte, in the play) got what she wanted, but not without cost. The price for organization, she told her peers, required the exclusion of homosexual crossdressers and transsexuals from fledgling crossdressing society. After all, says doppleganger Charlotte in Fierstein's play, "Fifty years from now, when homosexuals are

still the back-alley vermin of society, we will be dressing and as normal as smoking cigarettes.” Funny how that worked out.

Virginia’s homophobia was shared by the U.S. Post Office, which was determined to do its part to wipe out what they considered sexual perversion. Postal authorities had recently convicted Virginia of sending obscene materials through the mails. The material under question was erotic in nature—Virginia had a frisky exchange with another crossdresser (in an audio recording I made in the late 1990s, she told me she thought her correspondent was a female; I doubted it then and I doubt it now). For postal inspectors, the letters were a means to an end—the goal was to force Virginia to shut down *Transvestia*. To her everlasting credit, she refused. It cost her dearly—she was convicted of a felony and sentenced to three years in federal prison (Prince, 1993). Happily, she was not required to serve time. According to Andrea, the incident frightened Susanna so much she pulled advertising for the resort and Marie’s wig shop from *Transvestia*, maintaining she had no idea about the content or the nature of the readership. Valentina was never, so far as Andrea knew, investigated by the post office. I was prepared to think the postal service’s investigation of Valentina in Fierstein’s play was a plot contrivance, but then I discovered it wasn’t:

In 1961 Tito was summoned by postal officials. Two of her correspondents had been charged with mailing obscene materials, and Susanna’s name had come up. Tito pleaded respectability and denounced the obscenities. (Susanna Valenti, [A Gender Variance Who’s Who](#)).

Considering how gay men were reviled in American society in those pre-Stonewall years, considering that most of the crossdressers at the Hose and Heels Club and Casa Susanna (and Virginia as well) identified as heterosexual, and considering Virginia’s persecution at the hands of postal officials, it made a sort of sense that she wished to make it clear to the American public that crossdressing did not equal homosexuality.

I love this quote by Mr. Fierstein:

The truth is I’ve worked very hard to make sure I’m expressing it right, and I don’t come to conclusions in the play. Because I think it’s bulls–t to come to conclusions when I know the truth isn’t the same for any two people.

These men believed—remember we’re talking 1962, before Stonewall, before liberation—that no decent, God-fearing society would every accept homosexuals as normal. So, in the play Charlotte is speaking politically. The feeling was, we kill two birds with one stone by banning homosexuals: We get our wives to understand that we don’t want to have sex with each other (which, like I said was not true of everyone) and we tell society there’s no reason to be frightened of us, because we’re not looking at your dicks.

There was somebody online, a gay man, who actually said I wrote an anti-gay play. Like, “We all know that heterosexuals hate us, why does Harvey have to rub our faces in it?” But, for the time, I believe Charlotte was absolutely right. I think her choice was wrong for many reasons, but I could see why she made that conclusion, can’t you? (Kumar, 2014)



Harvey Fierstein

Unfortunately, Virginia was successful in forcing her homophobia onto the infantile crossdressing movement. It would be an unfortunate legacy.

And how did Virginia bend other crossdressers to her will? Not, in all likelihood, with blackmail, as Charlotte does in *Casa Valentina*. Rather, she used persuasion, coercion, peer pressure, banishment, and her often-vicious tongue to get her way. The result was the same, so I can hardly fault Fierstein for taking the literary license.

There was no shortage of homophobia amongst the crossdressers of the 1960s, but many were in fact gay or bisexual (especially when dressed) and many who weren't saw no good coming from Virginia's harsh stifling of dissenting voices. Outcasts and dropouts from FPE started rival publications (like Siobhan Donovan's *Turnabout*) and support groups and at least one book—Darryl Raynor's 1968 *A Year Among the Girls*—is devoted to Virginia's autocratic leadership style and its effect upon FPE members.

When dogma becomes policy, it tends to not go away. Virginia's no-transsexuals, no-gays, no-fetishists platform, once inculcated, persisted. The Society for the Second Self, FPE's successor organization, continues to this day to maintain Virginia's exclusionary membership criteria. It's a policy that [kept me from my own community for a decade](#), and it's a policy that [doesn't address the needs of the organization's members](#), who learn to hide their same-sex attractions and their tendencies toward transsexualism. It persists even when the underlying rationale no longer makes sense. After all, more than 50 years have passed. Gay men and lesbians are no longer considered "back-alley vermin;" they have become far more normalized in society than crossdressers.

So—what became of the people of Casa Susanna? Some, including Tito Valenti's wife Marie, died prematurely. Others lived long lives, crossdressing in secret until the end. Some eventually became open about their crossdressing. Felicity Chandel, for instance, [fought her conviction for crossdressing in public all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court](#). Yet others, including Katherine Cummings, came to identify as transsexual, transitioned gender roles, and had sex reassignment surgery.

And what of Susanna herself? According to her bio on *A Gender Variance Who's Who*, in 1968 she made the decision to live full time as a woman. She came out to readers of *Transvestia* in October, 1969 and continued to write for the magazine through early 1970. After that she vanishes from public view.

I didn't find Fierstein's play at all preachy. I suspect some who have called it so just weren't prepared for a play that deals with the political ramifications of crossdressing in early 1960s America.

When I had lunch with Andrea Susan a couple of weeks ago, we went through my copy of *Casa Susanna* and I made notes indicating which photos she took and which she developed. I've not counted, but I estimate about three-quarters of the photos are hers.



Andrea Susan and Daughter Jacqueline at the Premiere of Casa Valentina



Andrea Susan (L) and Harvey Fierstein

Andrea's uncredited photos tell a remarkable tale of secret desires and societal tensions in mid-Twentieth Century America. Robert Swope and Michel Hurst had no way of sourcing the images they purchased, and Harvey Fierstein, when writing *Casa Valentina*, had never heard of her—but to his credit, when Andrea's daughter Jacqueline gave him a call, Fierstein sent a pair of tickets to the premiere. There he met the person whose work informed his own. How cool is that?

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Andrea Susan will speak about her time at Casa Susanna this fall at Fantasia Fair.

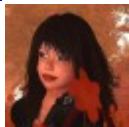
6 Comments

1. Jan25

[Isadoro](#)

he returns to his roots by penning a drama about another rare aspect of the social and sexual life of the American male.

[Reply](#)



o Mar07

[Dallas](#)

I saw Feirstein's Casa Valenina on Broadway. He nailed exactly Virginia Prince's homophobic no gays policies for the many organizations she founded. (And no transsexuals, either, which directly kept me out of the community for a decade). While he looked at Casa Susanna with a cisgender (sort of) gay man's eyes, he sussed out the important stuff and got it right.

[Reply](#)

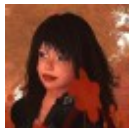
2. Oct30

[Katherine Cummings](#)

I do not believe that Andrea was in any sense an 'official' photographer for the Casa Susanna customers. I can't remember her carrying a camera on any of the occasions when we were both at the Resort and I would certainly have noticed a Rolleiflex, which is by no means easily concealable. I have visited Swope and Hurst and seen the originals of the photos from the book, as well as those that did not make the cut. I have no doubt that photos had been the property of Susanna and this would account for the predominance of photos of Susanna in the book, compared to images of "Dick" {not his real name}. Most are amateur 'snapshots' (some Polaroid) and very few show evidence of having been taken by a Rollei, which was a square format (2 1/4" sq.) camera. I have heard the interview Dallas Denny undertook with "Andrea" and there are numerous errors of fact in "Andrea's" version of "Dick's" life. I think "Andrea" either had a very poor memory or was simply

trying to cash in on Hurst's and Swope's success with the book Casa Susanna. Incidentally "Dick" was a close friend of mine (godfather of one of my children) and when he gave up cross-dressing at the request of his wife he asked me to look after his clothing and jewellery and another friend, now dead, to look after his books and, I believe, photos.

[Reply](#)

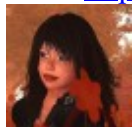


o Mar07

[Dallas](#)

I just came across this comment from Katherine. She must not have liked Andrea, and I'm certain she was offended by me in a long-ago critical review of her autobiography. She was transphobic in her post by putting quotations around Andrea's name, just a nasty piece of business. Andrea never claimed to be the official photographer; she was merely given the Rollei by one of the participants in exchange for a promise that she use it at Casa S. Obviously, there were a lot of Polaroid snapshots being made, as they were save, as they did not require film be given or mailed to a developer who might report or harass the sender. That was a very real threat in the 1950s and 1960s, and was a major concern of crossdressers. I had an opportunity to view the actual photos and saw Polaroids, some shots that were developed in commercial labs and were probably from Kodak Instamatic cameras or possibly 35mm SLRs, but most had clearly been home-developed; this was evidenced by the rough trimming and late of date of developing marked on the borders. Yes, the Rollei takes square photos (my father brought a Richoflex knockoff home from Japan and I still have negatives and prints of photos I took with it), but Andrea was also given an enlarger. I can't imagine she didn't crop many of the images, resulting in rectangular rather than square prints. That was the point of the large format of the Rollei (well, not large; it's considered medium format, but the negatives were large enough to allow considerable blowups and cropping without noticeably changing the quality of the image. Andrea was friends with David Wilde. She lived in Scarsdale, and David was impressed enough with the town to move there when his wife, the movie star Joan Bennett, insisted they live the city. It's difficult to imagine Katherine, who lived in Australia and traveled to the United states only twice, could have been close friends with David. So just a posthumous fuck you to you, Katherine.

[Reply](#)



3. Nov15

[Dallas](#)

I apologize for not replying to this long ago. I was certain I did.

You'll find there are safe spaces to allow you to crossdress in privacy. There are support groups, transgender conferences, and professional makeover services that will give you a glimpse of how you can look. It will take courage and money enough for at least one outfit and accessories, but go for it if you wish!

[Reply](#)

4. Jul01

Bobbi

would love to explore my desire of crossdressing fully.

[Reply](#)

TIME

Casa Susanna: Photographs From a 1950s Transvestite Hideaway





From *Casa Susanna*, a collection of found photographs edited by Michel Hurst and Robert Swope.

Michel Hurst and Robert Swope—powerHouse Books





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<https://time.com/3393976/casa-susanna-photographs-from-a-1950s-transvestite-hideaway/>



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NOV • 59 •



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APRIL 14, 2014 1:58 PM EDT

“I never stopped to think what a heterosexual transvestite was,” admitted Tony award-winning writer and actor Harvey Fierstein in a recent, wide-ranging discussion with LightBox about his new play, *Casa Valentina*, and the powerful real-life photos that inspired it.

Based on the story of Casa Susanna — a little-known refuge for heterosexual transvestites in the 1950s and early 1960s in the Catskills, New York — *Casa Valentina* tells a very Fiersteinian tale of people searching out their true selves against a backdrop of both unconditional fellowship and stark intolerance.

The images seen here were discovered about a decade ago at a Manhattan flea market by an antiques dealer, Robert Swope, and the collection was later published in the book, *Casa Susanna* (powerHouse, 2005). Today, the photographs are all that remain of Susanna — once called the Chevalier d'Eon, after an 18th-century crossdresser and spy.

The photos document the secret lives of men dressing as women and who are, perhaps, in flight from conforming to roles traditionally considered “manly — breadwinning for their families, making repairs around the house — even if just for a weekend. In these striking, weathered, vintage snapshots, we see them playing bridge, having cocktails and — in modern parlance — vamping for the camera.

“I believe these are ‘witness’ pictures,” Swope writes in the book’s introduction, “a way of validating an identity, a part-time life that was perhaps

more real than their lives away from Casa Susanna.”

“What I love about these photographs is the joy in their faces,” says Fierstein, an artist who has wrought gold from the joys (and drama) of cross-dressing in works like *Torch Song Trilogy*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *Kinky Boots*, and now *Casa Valentina*. (He changed the name of the place and all the characters for reasons of privacy.) Here, however, he immersed himself in the world of heterosexual transvestites and was surprised to discover how they consciously separated themselves from the gay rights moment at the time. To write the play, he says, “I had to get into the mind of a 1962 transvestite.”

His research led him to the writings of the house matriarch, Susanna Valenti, also known as Tito, who ran the resort and wrote essays for *Tranvestia*, a magazine published from 1960-1980 and aimed at cross-dressing men who defined themselves then as “sexually normal” (as opposed to homosexual). *Tranvestia* also first published many of the photographs republished years later in *Casa Susanna*.

In the process of writing his play, Fierstein imaginatively explored the desires and anxieties of the men in the photos. In their faces he saw a longing to escape from the strict conformity of the time. “Their dressing isn’t so they can be with other girls and play bridge,” he says. “Their dressing is to lose the male role. ‘I don’t have to take the car in. I’m freed from having all the answers. I’m freed from being the breadwinner.’ It’s to take on the female — they call it ‘the girl within.’ It’s to become this idealized female.”

At one point a character in his play says, “Women have fashion, bubble baths, daytime dramas, bridge clubs and weddings. What do men get? Work, war, and oil changes. It’s the curse of the Y chromosome and it’s punishable by dearth. A male would have to be certifiable not to want to be female at least part-time.”

These ideas were far more radical in the 1950s, when gender roles were so narrowly defined, than they are today, in our marginally more “enlightened” era.

“It’s all the pleasures and none of the pain [of being a woman], because it’s a fantasy,” Fierstein notes. “It has nothing to do with being a real woman — except that some of these men went on to become women.”

“The most interesting thing I learned in all of this, and what really became fascinating to me, is that there is no ‘normal’ to heterosexual. I already knew that there is more than one idea of homosexual, but there is no such thing as heterosexual. It’s all, as Kinsey said, a ‘sliding scale.’

In the end, in *Casa Valentina* and the photos made at Casa Susanna, gender is a quality that’s so undefined and personal for *everyone*, gay or straight. When speaking about pursuing one’s own happiness and his own sexuality Fierstein says, “Why would you deny yourself anything possible!”

Harvey Fierstein is a Tony-winning writer and actor. The play ***Casa Valentina*** is in previews at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre and opens April 23.

Casa Susanna is available from ***powerHouse books***

Paul Moakley is the Deputy Director of Photography and Visual Enterprise at *TIME*, you can follow him on twitter @paulmoakley

CONTACT US AT LETTERS@TIME.COM.

A Gender Variance Who's Who

Essays on trans, intersex, cis and other persons and topics from a trans perspective.....All human life is here.

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There is a detailed **Index** arranged by vocation, doctor, activist group etc. There is also a **Place Index** arranged by City etc. This is still evolving.

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01 February 2012

Susanna Valenti (192? - ?) translator, broadcaster, activist.

++ Updated April 2014, December 2017..

Tito Valenti emigrated to the US from Latin America in the mid-1940s.

[Katherine Cummings](#) says that Tito worked as a law court translator, however Darrell Raynor says that he was “a radio commentator who is well known internationally” and that he had interviewed the President and top generals, and [Hugo Beigel](#) says that he was a writer and dancer.

Valenti consulted a doctor in the late 1940s about his desires to cross-dress. The doctor showed understanding, and introduced him to another transvestite, the first that he had met.

Valenti’s second wife, Marie, ran a wig boutique in New York at 507 5th Avenue, advertised it in *Transvestia*, and introduced many of her clients to Susanna, her husband’s other persona. Indeed Susanna also had met her when looking for a wig. Marie also catered to professional female impersonators and was regarded as one of the better wig-makers in New York.

With the profits from her wig business, Marie purchased, in the mid 1950s, a country home in the [Catskills](#), which she and Susanna called *Chevalier D'Eon Resort*. It was an isolated 150 acres with a main house, a barn and several snug but unheated bungalows. For \$25 (\$190 in 2011 money) a weekend visitor from the city got food and board and lessons in passing as female. There were too few transvestite visitors to make a profit for the Valentis, and most weekends the resort was rented to regular guests. However Susanna did her impersonation show even for these.

Susanna published her address in *Transvestia* and hosted transvestite social events in her spacious New York apartment at 875 West End Ave. From there, Susanna and others went to the drag shows at the [82 Club](#), and the drag balls put on by the [Phil Black](#) and by the National Variety Artists. A few entered the beauty contests at the drag balls but in competition with the gay world and professional impersonators they rarely won. Susanna relished the crowds and the cameras at the entrance to the drag balls.

As Susanna, she wrote 53 opinion columns, “Susanna Says” for [Virginia Prince's](#) *Transvestia* magazine, from 1960 to 1970. She was known as more easy going than Prince. She coined the metaphor of the ‘girl-within’, that became popular among *Transvestia* readers. She is quoted as saying:

“Let us, for heaven’s sake, strive to forge a nice, clean cut, real person out of ‘the girl-within.’ Let’s give her a personality of her own. If possible, let’s give her even different tastes than those of ‘the guy within.”

Like Prince she believed in a dual personality that could be developed and worked on.

In 1961 Tito was summoned by postal officials. Two of her correspondents had been charged with mailing obscene materials, and Susanna’s name had come up. Tito pleaded respectability and denounced the obscenities.

++One person in regular attendance was the professional photographer later known as [Andrea Malick](#). She took still photographs and later made movies both at the resort and at Marie’s wig store in New York.

Of particular note is the gathering of 71 transvestites at the *Chevalier D'Eon Resort* for Halloween 1962, held a day after the New York police unusually raided the annual National Variety Artists costume ball and 30 cross-dressed “men” were arrested. The guests at *Chevalier D'Eon Resort* included Virginia Prince, Katherine Cummings, [Felicity Chandelle](#), Darrell Raynor and [Gail Wilde](#), and psychologists Hugo Beigel and [Wardell Pomeroy](#). Raynor, Cummings and Beigel later wrote about the event.



Susanna in 1961

This and That - r replacement after withdrawing from

<https://zagria.blogspot.com/2012/02/susanna-valenti-192-translator.html>

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Halloween 1962: Virginia at left, Felicity at right.

Both Virginia and Susanna were upset by one guest who not only did not bother to shave, he also smoked a cigar. This brought Susanna closer to Virginia's point of view that a cultivation of 'inner femininity' distinguished true transvestites from drag queens and fetishists. She expressed this opinion in her column several times. Initially 'fetishism' had been equated with partial dressing, but FPE increasingly identified as fetishistic those who fully dressed as female but failed or didn't bother to fashion themselves as truly feminine. A few years later Sheila Niles would propose the term 'whole girl fetishist'.

In 1963, Susanna and Marie sold their resort property as it was unprofitable. In early 1964 they bought another 150 acre property with a large house, close to Hunter, New York. This became *Casa Susanna*, and like the *Chevalier D'Eon Resort* was frequented by the transvestite crowd. Susanna and her guests would go, dressed, to drive-in movies and to friendly neighbours. Some transvestite visitors even went into the village of Hunter for shopping, where, if nothing else, they were noted for being overdressed.

In 1965 Hugo Beigel wrote an article for *Siobhan Frederick's Turnabout*, a New York alternative to *Transvestia*. In "The Myth of the Latent Femininity in the Male" Dr Beigel dismissed the idea that a male-bodied person could have a feminine soul. Susanna replied in *Transvestia* that Beigel was taking the girl-within over-literally rather than as a metaphor. The metaphor of the girl-within, she maintained, was simply an uncomplicated way of expressing these various motivations and urges that make up a transvestite's second personality, the feminine self that had to be kept hidden in public settings out of fear of social disapproval. She also countered his claim that transvestism is an acquired condition. Her position was that

"a congenital predisposition (genes, chromosomes, hormones, chemical patterns, etc.) in the TV makes him gravitate towards these diverse elements which, together, spell femininity in our time ... no matter what social and psychological elements play on a boy, he will not be a TV unless he carries within his body the biological seed of TVism".

From this she argued that transvestism could not be cured, and it was not a behavioral disorder.

"But how about the thousands of TVs who do not feel the need to go to a mental doctor. How about us, who feel that dressing gives us serenity, calm, contentment, happiness?"

In 1966 the noted photographer Walter Rutter came and took a series of photographs at *Casa Susanna*.

In 1968 Susanna responded in her column to Prince's recent appearance on the *Alan Burke* television show. Burke pushed the line that a transvestite taking hormones and considering surgery was close to being a transsexual. Prince replied that she would not have the operation for anything. Susanna commented:

"Such a statement marks the boundary between the TV and the TS. The TV rejects the thought of surgery. He enjoys living the two sides of the human coin."

However she estimated that she personally knew a dozen transvestites who had had surgery.

"I met them all before the sex change, and some of them, at first, did not know they were TS's, they only knew that they enjoyed dressing and would feel much happier as girls than in their male role."

However she believed that many who did think themselves as transsexuals were mistaken. She also criticized transsexuals as a group as not being able to pass:

"Very few of the TS's I know have learned to move and gesture with that suppleness that is exclusively female".

The next year she continued:

"Society insists upon females behaving like ladies—and this is where our TS and pseudo TS friends fail in a most regrettable way. I am thinking right now of several instances whereby people continue to 'read' a TS as being a man even AFTER the operation".

Susanna doubted Harry Benjamin's statement that he knew of no one who had undergone the operation and was disappointed. Instead, Susanna could imagine few successful scenarios for post-operative transsexuals.



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model, performer

By 1968 Susanna had decided to live full-time as female. She started getting to know the merchants and others in Hunter and surrounding towns. She avoided going in with other transvestites as they might 'blow her cover'. In 1969 she had her ears pierced, took voice lessons and told her three step-grandchildren.

In the October 1969 *Transvestia* she announced what she was doing. She had lost the "fabulous thrill" that comes with the transformation from 'him' to 'her' but it was becoming increasingly agonizing for her to make the switch back to 'him'.

She planned to quit her job in the city and run Casa Valenti as a year-round bed-and-breakfast. She was criticized, as Virginia Prince had been two years earlier making a similar announcement, for failing to maintain the balance. In her last column, January 1970, Susanna spoke about the support from family and friends, and her ability to pass. She said nothing about her relationship with Marie, or what Marie thought about what she was doing. Susanna did provide an article for the 100th issue of *Transvestia* in 1979 on accomplishments in heterosexual transvestism, but said nothing of her own situation.

Nothing is known of her after that, and it is not known when Susanna died. Katherine Cummings mentions that Marie died in a domestic accident, but doesn't say when.

++An exhibition of Walter Rutter's photographs of Casa Susanna was held in Fall 2003 at the Laurence Miller Gallery in New York City.

In the 2000s, Robert Swope discovered hundreds of photographs at the 26th Street flea market in New York. He instantly read the photographs as of men dressed as women, and purchased them. He and his partner, Michel Hurst arranged the photographs as a book, and when it was published in 2005, it became a fashion item and was sold in design stores.

Robert Hill, working on his PhD about Virginia Prince and Tri-Ess, found the book in a Borders store, and contacted Swope and Hurst through their publisher, and was able to connect the photographs to his own work.

Hurst and Swope were commissioned by a Hollywood studio to write a treatment, and dreamt of cis male stars. Presumably the film was lost in pre-production hell, as the film people say.

In 2014 **Harvey Fierstein** (*Torch Song Trilogy*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Kinky Boots*, *Hairspray*) turned Casa Susanna into a Broadway play, *Casa Valentina*.

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What is it with **New York Route 23A**? *Casa Susanna* was outside the village of Hunter. Continue 15-20 km east on the 23A and you come to Palenville where you can find the *Cybele Maetreum* and the same distance again gets you to the village of Catskill which is where **Dawn Langley Simmons** fled to in 1973.



I have no reason to think that this Robert Swope is the one fired in 2000 for criticizing the *Vagina Monologues*.

The distinction between transvestite and drag queen that I mainly use is that a transvestite wishes to pass and a drag queen likes to be read. Given Susanna's stage performances and her thrill in running the gauntlet into the drag balls, we can see quite a bit of drag queen in Susanna.



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FPE/Tri-Ess is of course known for its homophobia, so it is a nice irony that a gay couple found and published the photographs. (Original meaning of nice = fine or subtle).

Don't you just love it that the HBS narrative, of we the true trans are congenital and those we don't like are fetishists, is found full-blown in FPE in the early 1960s. They did it first.

++Walter Rutter's photographs have almost completely disappeared from the web. A few can be seen [here](#).

++Bonnet include an anecdote about Susanna Valenti that I have never seen anywhere else: "What is strange is, when I was in Manhattan in the early 80's, in between gigs, sometimes, I would cater private parties for extra money. I was asked to cater several parties for a Lady Susanna over a period of a couple of years. I was paid well and told not to speak of it. I swear, I believe Lady Susanna was Tito... [...] All attendees at the parties were cross dressers and straight businessmen, from cab drivers to Wall Street. [...] If I remember correctly, her place was a townhouse in Chelsea. The interior was all red and black with lots of silk and velvet like a bordello." Of all people this is a quote from the real-estate agent who is selling what used to be Casa Susanna! We have no information about Susanna after 1970, and thus the anecdote is intriguing. However the source is such that it is what a court of law would dismiss as hearsay.

Time: 05:16 

Labels: activist, broadcaster, Club 82, FPE-TriEss, performer, translator, writer

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A Gender Variance Who's Who

Essays on trans, intersex, cis and other persons and topics from a trans perspective.....All human life is here.

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14 March 2013

Virginia Prince (1912 - 2009): Part 1 - Youth and First marriage

See also: [Did Virginia Prince have Harry Benjamin Syndrome?](#) and [The Myth That Transgender is a Princian Concept](#).

Previously in April 2008, I wrote an account of Virginia Prince, who started life as Arnold Lowman. With all due modesty I think that it still stands as the best short account of her. I wrote it based mainly on the books by Richard Docter, Richard Ekins and Vern Bullough. Particularly after I wrote my [TG, Words and Concepts series](#), I realized that my account of Prince could be much improved. This realization was further developed by reading Robert Hill's dissertation which is largely based on a close reading of *Transvestia* magazine. One problem with most accounts of Virginia Prince is that they are not integrated into GLBT and general history. Hence I have included background events below, mainly of what else was going on in Los Angeles, but also elsewhere when it seemed appropriate, to give a contextualization.

- Part 1 – Youth and First marriage
- [Bibliography](#)
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- Part III – [Femmiphilic activist](#)
- Part IV – [Full-time Living](#)
- Part V – [Transgenderist dowager](#)
- [Jargon terms and general comments](#)

Charles Leroy Lowman (1879-1977) was born in Park Ridge, Illinois. Both his paternal grandparents were physicians. He trained as doctor at the University of Southern California, interned at California Lutheran Hospital and studied orthopedic surgery at the Massachusetts General Hospital and the Children's Hospital in Boston. In 1909 he started a small out-patient clinic for handicapped children, and was the only orthopedist between San Francisco and New Orleans, traveling through five states to practice. He married [Elizabeth Hudson Arnold](#) (1882-1968), the daughter of a prosperous Indiana farmer and Ella Gifford Ferris, who was a cousin of George Ferris, the inventor the [Big Wheel](#) that first appeared at the 1893 Chicago Exposition¹. Charles and Elizabeth Lowman had two children: Arnold born in 1912 and Elizabeth born four years later.²

The owner of the building where Charles Lowman had his clinic made an offer that if Lowman could establish a functioning hospital within 15 years, he would donate clear title to the building and its gardens. This was done and further expansion of the [Los Angeles Orthopedic Hospital](#) was being discussed when the 15 years had passed in 1922. Lowman pioneered aquatherapy for poliomyelitis patients, and devised motor-driven lifts to get the patients in and out of the water. He pioneered fascia lata strap transplants which enabled wheelchair-bound patients to walk with crutches.

Elizabeth Sr contributed to the home by shrewd investments in property and stocks. For grades 3-7 Arnold was transferred from his local public school to the residential [Glendora Foothill Christian School](#), fifty miles to the east. On Thanksgiving Day in his seventh grade, the school burnt down, and he was transferred back to a local school.

Arnold developed a fixation with high-heeled shoes. They were of course not welcome in the home of an orthopedist. He moved on to his mother's clothes, and then started collecting his own. By the age of 12 Arnold was an accomplished cross-dresser and could pass in public as a girl. He used the name Muriel. (Docter:41-2) As Prince wrote in 1979:

"Starting at the age of about twelve I found myself fascinated with wearing my mother's clothes on all occasions when the family would be out. It was sexually exciting and thrilling but it was also frightening and it gave rise to a tremendous load of guilt and shame. With that kind of pressure I should have quit – and I did – many times, I felt terrible about it, guilt ridden and wondering what was wrong with me – an otherwise normal, functional boy. For a while I supposed that I must be a homosexual – though I had no interest in boys sexually. When I got that straightened out in my head I decided that I must be psychopathic. But on the other hand, I was an intelligent, above-average student, an athlete, member of clubs, etc. But even if I was not either of those two things surely I must be the only otherwise normal boy who was so weird as to want to wear girl's clothes. I went through adolescence with those worries, and I kept on dressing on every occasion when I thought I could do so safely. While it started out as an erotic experience each time, there came a time when, after eroticism had run its course, I discovered that there was still a very special pleasure in 'being' a 'girl'. Instead of just being an erotically aroused male in a dress, I found that I was somehow different. I did not know for years what was going on – or more properly what was coming out. It was that part of myself that had been hidden and suppressed in all my growing years – just as it is in all men. It was my other half, that half that when openly expressed is termed feminine."

This and That - r replacement after withdrawing from

<https://zagria.blogspot.com/2013/03/virginia-prince-1912-2009-part-1-youth.html>

Other Trans Hist

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In 1922, the Los Angeles City Council had revised its anti-masquerading law of 1898. It now stated that if one dressed in the clothes of the opposite sex on the streets, a penalty of up to six-months in jail or a fine of up to \$500 could be imposed. By 1924 the Los Angeles drag culture was dominated by [Clarabelle](#), who was regarded as the queen mother of Bunker Hill. Arnold never spoke of this. That was also the year that male-impersonator Jean Southern accosted a police officer who failed to read her, and the encounter made headlines in the *Los Angeles Times*. [Julian Eltinge](#) was the US's top female impersonator and was playing to sell-out audiences at the Los Angeles [Orpheum Theater](#).

Charles Lowman was a prolific author and innovator in the field of orthopedic medicine. He published *A Collection of Papers Dealing with Some Physical, Educational, Physiotherapeutic & Orthopaedic Problems* in 1924, persuaded the California legislature to provide teachers for handicapped children in hospital in 1927 and co-published *Corrective Physical Education for Groups: A Text Book of Organization, Theory, and Practice* in 1928.

At age 18, in drag, Arnold won a prize for best costume at his church Halloween party. He did his BA at [Pomona College](#), Los Angeles where by chance he shared a dorm with Edward Richards, the future [Barbara Wilcox](#), although they did not know each other.

Whether young Arnold knew or not, 1932 was a peak year for pansy revues (which featured female impersonation) with appearances in Los Angeles by [Karyl Norman](#) and [Jean Malin](#), and the next year Hollywood made a record number of films with pansy content. However, from 1932 onwards, and especially after the end of Alcohol Prohibition in 1933, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) started busting the pansy clubs. BBB's Cellar and Jimmie's Back Yard were raided repeatedly. The raid on [The Big House](#) in fall 1932 met resistance: the patrons fought back and a female impersonator attempted to escape through a window. The bar, renamed Buddy's Rendezvous, reopened, and the police returned eight months later and arrested five transvestites on vagrancy charges. In November 1933 another raid on Jimmie's Back Yard resulted in 90-day sentences for the owner, the mistress of ceremonies and the piano player. Three other female impersonators were each sentenced to six months – the maximum penalty. Harold Brown, arrested on suspicion of posing as a narcotics officer, was discovered to be female bodied and got a suspended 30-day sentence for masquerading. Three pansy bars were shut down in 1936, and another three the next year. [Frank Shaw](#), the Los Angeles Mayor, ran a notably corrupt administration from 1933 until he was recalled in 1938. He was opposed by Clifford Clinton, a restaurateur, who with others filed a grand jury report that led to the recall. Part of Shaw's fight back was to step up the attack on 'sex pervert' bars. This was reinforced in 1937 by a national sex panic after children were killed in New York, and [J Edgar Hoover](#) declared 'War on the Sex Criminal'. In 1940 even Julian Eltinge was prevented from appearing on stage in Los Angeles in female clothes, and was obliged to do his act in a tuxedo with his dresses on mannequins.

However private parties in Hollywood and even public appearances by its stars were another matter. Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo and Katherine Hepburn were known for their male attire, both on screen and when out socializing. Film director, [Dorothy Arzner](#), the only female director in Hollywood, was known for dressing in men's clothes. In 1937, [Howard Greer](#), the Hollywood fashion designer who did the costumes for [Bringing Up Baby](#) and [My Favorite Wife](#), threw a drag party at which he hired female impersonators to sing a Cole Porter song in front of the real Cole Porter (Gay LA: 46) In 1938 Los Angeles resident [Michael Higgins](#) was arrested on charges of grand theft and fraud, and discovered to be female-bodied.

Meanwhile Arnold graduated from Pomona College in 1935 and did postgraduate studies in pharmacology at the University of California at Berkeley.

Charles Lowman published *Balance skills in physical education* in 1935, and the next year Arnold co-published with a fellow student a paper on lactic dehydrogenase. In 1937 Charles Lowman published *The Therapeutic Theatre*, and contributed to *Technique of Underwater Gymnastics; A Study in Practical Application*. Arnold's MS thesis was on lactic dehydrogenase, and the fellow student and he published a book on the topic in 1939. Arnold's PhD thesis, *Carbohydrate Metabolism and Its Relation to the Cancer Problem*, was completed in the same year.

Elizabeth followed her brother to Pomona College and then Berkeley. She later met and married a mining engineer, and they moved to Nevada. They had three children.

[Fletcher Bowron](#), who was mayor of Los Angeles 1938-53, had a particular antipathy to women in trousers. In 1942 he declared to the city council that he loathed "to see masculine women much more than feminine traits in men" and got them to pass a regulation barring female employees at City Hall from wearing pants.

In 1941 Arnold outed himself as a transvestite to his father after a trip to San Francisco, by being his femme self when his father arrived to pick him up. This was just before his first marriage, to Dorothy Shepherd (1909 – 1985) a secretary from Anoka, Minnesota, whom he had met at church. The wedding was held in the Lowman home, the day after Arnold burned all his female clothing. Mr and Mrs Lowman then moved to San Francisco where Arnold had a job with Del Monte Foods, and later on a medical research project for one of his professors who was now at the University of California Medical School at San Francisco.

Arnold researched transvestism in the medical library. He noted two case studies of interest being presented in the psychiatry department, and attended both. The first was by [Barbara Wilcox](#) who had been his classmate at Pomona College, and was by then living as a woman and had petitioned the Superior Court of California to change her name and to become legally a woman. The second presentation was by [Louise Lawrence](#), the pioneering transvestite organizer who put transvestites in touch with each other, and with sympathetic doctors. Either Arnold badgered the lecture organizer to reveal Louise's home address, and Louise took in the nervous young man on her doorstep (Stryker, 2005: xv); or he sneaked a look in the case file to obtain her address, and telephoned and asked to meet (Docter: 45). In either case Lawrence introduced Virginia Prince as Arnold named himself (he lived on Prince Street) to other transvestites in San Francisco, and provided contacts in Los Angeles. Through her he became a patient of [Karl Bowman](#) of the [Langley Porter Psychiatric Clinic](#), the seventh psychiatrist that he consulted, who told him to "relax and learn to accept yourself" (TV&Wife: 5-6). She also introduced him, in the late 1940s, to a doctor who spent each summer in San Francisco, and was starting to build a practice with transvestite clients: [Harry Benjamin](#).

In 1945 the millionaire [Howard Hughes](#) went to San Francisco's famous [Finocchio's](#) female impersonation revue and night club where he met performer [Pussy Katt](#). Shortly afterwards he flew her to Mexico City for an operation that made her America's first surgical transsexual. Meanwhile in Los Angeles, Clarabelle, the queen of Bunker Hill was no more. Her successors were [Wilhemena](#), and then [Carioca](#) (who later died on an operating table in [Calexico](#)). The inter-racial Club Alabam on Los Angeles' Central Avenue continued to sponsor an annual drag ball contest.

When the research project was over Arnold and Dorothy returned to Los Angeles where Arnold found work as a chemist. Their only son, Brent, was born in 1946. For the first five or six years of their marriage, Arnold kept his cross-dressing from Dorothy, but then got it into his head that he was going as a half man/half woman to the church Halloween party. Dorothy was not thrilled. Afterward they had a long talk and agreed that Arnold was not to dress in her presence, but that she would do his clothing shopping, to avoid one risk. Then Arnold got to be Virginia about once every two weeks. He started spending time with [Edith Ferguson](#) and other transvestites. They attended meetings at the Long Beach home of [Joan Thornton](#), who shared the same interest.

[William Parker](#) (played by Nick Nolte in the film *Gangster Squad*) was Los Angeles Police Chief from 1950 until his death in 1966. He repeatedly sent his men to raid gay and lesbian bars and to treat gays and lesbians as if they were criminals. So many arrests occurred that an entire section of the Lincoln Heights jail was reserved for gay and trans inmates, nicknamed the "fruit tank". One case that made the newspapers in 1950 was of three Negro domestic servants who were arrested for dressing as female.

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[Logan Carter \(19: model, performer](#)

Virginia Prince, 1948. Plate 1 in JJ Allen, *The Man in the Red Velvet Dress*

includes "heterosexuals, there are definite fetishists, sadists, masochists, voyeurs, homosexuals, etc.", and Edith Ferguson had previously been a female impersonator. However there were cross-dressers who were not invited such as fellow Angeleno and heterosexual **Edward D. Wood**, Angeleno **Sascha Brastoff**, **José Sarria** who was starting to organize fellow drag queens in San Francisco, and the majority of female impersonators, such as those who performed at Finocchio's in San Francisco. Nor was the invitation extended to female cross-dressers. While Lowman maintained that women were free to wear what they liked, many women in Los Angeles, mainly lesbians, were being arrested for 'masquerading' and dumped in the Daddy Tank at Lincoln Heights jail. One of these was **Nancy Valverde** who was arrested many times in this period.

In 1953 when Arnold was attempting to modify his visiting rights and reduce his alimony, he was again named in the press as a transvestite and his father threatened to disown him. This was at the same time that Christine Jorgensen was in the news after returning from Denmark, and it was announced that Bela Lugosi's next film would be called *Transvestite*. The director, **Edward D Wood**, announced that the film, which was eventually called *Glen or Glenda*, would have no relation to the transvestite divorce story then in the Los Angeles newspapers. The judge ruled in favor of Arnold who was allowed custody one day a week and alternate holidays, increased the son's support to \$60 and discontinued the alimony payments. However Dorothy moved back to Minnesota with Brent. Arnold called on her some years later. They had a cordial evening, but then never saw each other again.

Harry Benjamin had helped Lowman with "parental and marital problems" (TV&Wife: 6, Ekins & King, 2006: 81), and put him on female hormones, which he continued for a few years. As Virginia, Arnold wrote to Christine Jorgensen that he had "a missionary complex" and hoped to "alleviate the lot of our kind in the social scheme" (quoted in Meyerowitz:182). Benjamin arranged for Virginia to have a personal interview with Christine and her mother while they were in Los Angeles (Ekins & King, 2006: 235n4; Docter 2008:xii). As Prince later admitted, at this time he was considering sexual surgery: "If I had had the money at the time, I would have taken the boat to Europe". ("The Life and Times of Virginia", *Transvestia*, 100, 1979; TS&PseudoTS :271).

In 1954 the LAPD raided LaVie Cafe in Altadena and arrested five 'men' for wearing women's clothes. **Tamara Rees**, another ex-GI turned female was in town to do a burlesque show. Elmer Belt discontinued doing sex-change operations after a committee of doctors decided against it, but restarted a few years later.

That year two lesbians, in separate cases, challenged the Los Angeles anti-masquerading law, and in both cases the courts declared that cross-dressing alone did not constitute guilt under the ordinance unless there was further intent to conceal one's identity. However the LAPD and the local politicians simply ignored these two rulings.

By 1951 Dorothy Lowman felt unable to cope with her husband's cross-dressing, and saw a psychiatrist who explained that Arnold was homosexual. She sued for divorce mainly citing her husband's "admitted propensity for feminine apparel". Arnold was ordered to pay \$50 a month for his son's support and \$50 for his wife's. His transvestism was publicized during the proceedings, which led to contacts with more transvestites. (Docter: 29-35, 47-8)

One who did not establish contact was **Gigi Hemingway** who was arrested *en femme* in the women's restroom of a Los Angeles movie theater. Many gays and trans were incarcerated in Atascadero State Hospital, a maximum-security facility, which came to be known as the 'Dachau for queers'. Atascadero was frequently visited by Dr **Walter Freeman** who specialized in ice-pick lobotomies. This was done through the eye socket. Of the 4,000 patients he treated this way, over 30% were diagnosed as homosexual (which included transvestites). Another of his victims may have been the film star, **Francis Farmer**.

Charles Lowman co-published *Therapeutic Use of Pools and Tanks* in 1952. The same year the group meeting at Joan Thornton's created a mimeographed newsletter: *Transvestia: Journal of the American Society for Equality in Dress* – a name suggested by Joan, who was the major editor. The initial subscription list was built around Louise Lawrence's address book, and the subscription list for Edith Ferguson's instruction course. Arnold contributed under the name Muriel. While only two issues were made, they were mailed to all the cross-dressers that they could identify in the United States and to sympathetic doctors and sexologists including **Alfred Kinsey**. Without paid subscriptions, the project proved to be too expensive to continue. This was at the same time as the fledgling homophile organization, **ONE, Inc** started selling its magazine. The first attempt to ban it by the US Post Office occurred a year later. At the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Medicine **Elmer Belt** had started doing controversial sex change operations.

For the group at Joan Thornton's, there was a question of who was a transvestite. Louise Lawrence had written that the group



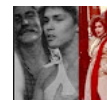
ASKS CUSTODY—Arnold Lowman, who testified he's a transvestite. Times photo

Father Admits Liking to Wear Feminine Garb

For the benefit of a court of law, Arnold Lowman, 40, explained yesterday that a transvestite is a person who likes wearing clothes of the opposite sex and then casually admitted being a transvestite.

Lowman, a chemist and part owner of a cosmetics manufacturing company, gave his testimony before Acting Superior Judge Clarence E. Johns during hearing on his petition for the right to take the custody of his son, Brent, 6, every other week end.

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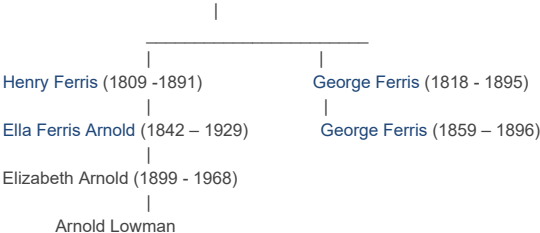
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1. Docter:18 says that **George Washington Ferris** was Arnold's great-great grandfather. As George Ferris lived 1859-96 this seemed improbable. With the aid of genealogy sites I was able to construct the following:

Silvanus Ferris (1773-1861)



Hence George Ferris was Arnold's grandmother's cousin. While he built the first Ferris Wheel, he died alone and impoverished, of typhoid at age 37.

2. Doctor:19 says that the Lowmans lived at 123 South Hobart Avenue until Arnold was eight. According to Google Maps, there is no such address. It must be South Hobart Boulevard. However [ferristree.com](#) says that the first address was 7121 Senalda Road which is in the Hollywood Hills.

They then moved to 867 Victoria Avenue "two blocks off Wilshire Boulevard ... in the Hancock Park neighborhood". There is such an address, in the Venice district. However South Victoria Avenue is close to Wilshire Boulevard.

Arnold went to a Christian School, met his wife in church, did his early drag appearances at church Halloween socials, and as we will see in Part II the first meeting of the Hose and Heel club was in a church building. After that we hear no more about any involvement with a church.

Arnold completed his PhD in 1939 at the age of 27. The US joined WWII two years later. There is no mention in any of the sources that he was called to be inducted into the military. Did the military not want qualified pharmacists? It is difficult to believe that the Arnold who had not yet met Louise Lawrence avoided service by confessing his transvestism, and being refused.

For some reason the Find-a-Grave page on [Elizabeth Arnold](#) does not link to either husband or children (although it does say "remains buried with the Prince family - Ferris family relations").

Time: 00:32
Labels: autogynephilia, Benjamin patient, Bowman patient, changeback, famous father, femmiphilia, pre-transition marriage, revisions, transkid
Location Los Angeles, CA, USA

9 comments:

Anonymous 4/9/08 00:11
Fascinating: I can't slip a tissue between Prince's femiphilia and the notion of autogynophilia (AG's) either.

Nor can I distinguish between BBL & co's beliefs about homosexual transsexuals and AG's.

It's all just a rehash of Prince's old beliefs.
cheers

Jo.
Reply

Anonymous 22/3/09 07:33
lovely to know that AUTOGYNISM is alive and well...an interest in shemale LOL
Reply

Lisa C. Gilinger 3/5/09 18:48
For me, as a kid, seeing Virginia Prince on TV so many years ago when there was no other person standing up saying, it is OK to have been identified as male at birth and live your life as female, was like throwing a match on a stack of hope kindling. It burned in my heart for a long while after. I am so glad I had the chance to meet her and tell her how much her courage meant to me as a kid that just happened to park my butt in front of the TV at just the right moment.

I have heard her described as an imperfect person, and I have heard her theories and ideas dissected. I just see her as someone that left a lasting

mined opposition from the child's mother, Mrs. Dorothy S. Lowman, 41, who was given full custody of her son when she divorced Lowman July 16, 1951. She based her objections principally on her former husband's admitted propensity for feminine apparel.
Called to the witness stand, Lowman readily conceded that he is the owner of four or five dresses—one a formal—and a complete wardrobe of coats, lingerie, jewelry and women's shoes.
"And some women's wigs?" inquired Mrs. Lowman's lawyer.
"Yes, two of them," he replied.
Lowman testified that he wears the feminine attire "on occasions," sometimes two or three times a week and sometimes not oftener than twice a month. He said he uses this clothing for masquerade parties but at times wears it to downtown Los Angeles for "window shopping."
Artistic, Not Immoral
"I enjoy these clothes," he explained, "because they are so much more artistic than those usually worn by men. My interest in them dates back to when I was 14 or 15 years old and it is artistic, not immoral."
Lowman admitted that his wife knew nothing of his taste for women's clothing when they were married here Aug. 16, 1941, but said he later told her all about it and that on one or two occasions she even bought women's shoes for him herself.
Ordered to pay \$50 for his son's support and \$50 more for his wife's at the time of the divorce, Lowman also requested yesterday that the alimony be eliminated now because Mrs. Lowman has become self-supporting. But Mrs. Lowman demanded continuance of the alimony and in addition asked that the payments for the boy's support be increased to \$100 a month.
The hearing is expected to close today.

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 - Virginia Prir Part III – Femmiph activist
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 - Virginia Prir (1912 - 2009) Part 1 - Youth and ...
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 - Stella Ming (1927-?) bawdy hc keeper
 - Rex/Gloria (-1970) business

impression of hope in my very young heart, especially when at that time my hopes were running pretty thin. Thank you Virginia. May you rest in peace.

Reply

Anonymous 9/5/09 14:39

It is sad to hear of her passing.

I had a run-in with her once when I was still a boy dressing as a girl. I was dressed in a tuxedo and our group was playing miniature golf. Needless to say, she was not pleased that I was there.

I still am sorry to here that she is gone. She did so much to advance the acceptance of transgender people and it is a shame that pioneers like her are a rare commodity. Rest in peace, Virginia.

Reply



Lanine Toote 3/6/09 22:34

Thank you for sharing this article! Is there any video available of Virginia? Youtube as come up short.

Reply

Anonymous 20/12/09 12:25

I saw her/him on the Alan Burke Show in 1968. Prince was billed as Charles Prince, author of 'The Transvestite and His Wife.' I recall a bulky, unattractive Jewish-looking guy in a black wig.

Reply

Danielle 30/5/10 17:33

I took over the Presidency of the Alpha Chapter of TriEss in Los Angeles in January 2009. I am every proud of having met Virginia several times before she passed away. We had a memorial dinner for her in North Hollywood in May 2009.

Danielle

Reply

Anonymous 20/12/10 05:17

Hola, saludos desde Colombia, soy Jessica Vanegas Callejas y quiero decir que Virginia Charles Prince fue un Angel de Dios que nos abrio el camino a tantos feminofilos que estabamos en busca de respuestas. Dios la bendiga. jesicavanegas@hotmail.com

Reply



Zagria 14/3/13 00:37

This is a marker to separate comments on the original version from those on the new.

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A Gender Variance Who's Who

Essays on trans, intersex, cis and other persons and topics from a trans perspective.....All human life is here.

This site is the most comprehensive on the web devoted to trans history and biography. Well over 1400 persons worthy of note, both famous and obscure, are discussed in detail, and many mentioned in passing.

There is a detailed **Index** arranged by vocation, doctor, activist group etc. There is also a **Place Index** arranged by City etc. This is still evolving.

In addition to this most articles have one or more labels at the bottom. Click one to go to similar persons. There is a full list of labels at the bottom of the right-hand sidebar. There is also a sidebar on the left. Enjoy exploring!

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This and That							

15 March 2013

Virginia Prince: Bibliography.

Part I – [Youth and First marriage](#)
Bibliography
Part II – [Second Marriage](#)
Part III – [Femmiphilic activist](#)
Part IV – [Full-time Living](#)
Part V – [Transgenderist dowager](#)
[Jargon terms and general comments](#)

As I have supplied line source notes, it is seemly that I should provide the bibliography now, rather than at the end.

As usual on this site, the bibliography is in chronological order. It is not by author surname.

Where a source item is simply Doctor, the reference is to *From Man to Woman*, 2004. If to either of his other books, a year is given.

It is interesting that so many books and articles have been written about Virginia Prince, but none of them mention that she published three books under the name Arnold Lowman. She also wrote transvestite fiction anonymously. Such are marked below as: Anonymous (Virginia Prince).

- Charles Leroy Lowman. *A Collection of Papers Dealing with Some Physical, Educational, Physiotherapeutic & Orthopaedic Problems*. Los Angeles,1924.
- Charles Leroy Lowman, Claire Colestock & Hazel Cooper. *Corrective physical education for groups: a text book of organization, theory, and practice* /by Charles Leroy Lowman, Claire Colestock, Hazel Cooper . New York: A.S. Barnes.1928.
- Charles Leroy Lowman. *Balance skills in physical education*, . Ann Arbor, Mich., Edwards brothers, inc. 1935.
- Charles Gurchot & Arnold Lowman. "A Stable and Potent Lactic Dehydrogenase Preparation". *Proceedings of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine. Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine (New York, NY)*. Vol. 35. No. 2. Royal Society of Medicine, 1936.
- Charles Leroy Lowman. *The Therapeutic Theatre*. New York: Samuel French, 1937.
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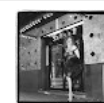
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George Selwyn (1919) was the son of a country gentleman who was educated at Eton where he met Horace Wainwright at Hertford College



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A Gender Variance Who's Who

Essays on trans, intersex, cis and other persons and topics from a trans perspective.....All human life is here.

This site is the most comprehensive on the web devoted to trans history and biography. Well over 1400 persons worthy of note, both famous and obscure, are discussed in detail, and many mentioned in passing.

There is a detailed Index arranged by vocation, doctor, activist group etc. There is also a Place Index arranged by City etc. This is still evolving.

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15 March 2013

Virginia Prince: Part II – Second Marriage

Part 1 – Youth and First marriage

Bibliography

Part II – Second Marriage

Part III – Femmiphilic activist

Part IV – Full-time Living

Part V – Transgenderist dowager

Jargon terms and general comments

Charles Leroy Lowman published his seminal work, *Abdominal Fascial Transplants*, in 1954. He remained Chief of Staff at the Orthopedic Hospital until 1955 when he was 75. His son Arnold had several ideas re cosmetics which he published as his second book, *Chemistry in Your Beauty Shop*, also 1955. With a partner he set up a business, Cardinal Industries, located on real estate owned by his mother.¹

With the encouragement of his mother, Arnold married a second time in 1956 to Doreen Skinner, of English origins, who had been his parents' housekeeper and after initial misgivings, was accepting of his cross-dressing. Arnold initially found Doreen to be unattractive because of her "dowdy attire, old-fashioned hair style and lack of makeup". He instructed her and she became more attractive. She told him that she had discovered photographs of his father cross-dressed. Arnold and Doreen went out socially as two women, and spent weekends in San Francisco like that. Doreen bought him a white satin nightgown as a wedding present. She also helped Arnold run his business selling grooming products for dogs and humans. They designed and built a house in Nichols Canyon. It included a special room with wardrobes, a sewing machine and several mirrors. (Docter: 35-7)

In a club in West Hollywood that same year, **Rae Bourbon** was billed as 'not a female impersonator', and was charged by the LAPD and convicted of impersonating a female. In January 1957 **Confidential** Magazine outed actor/dancer **Dan Dailey** as a transvestite: "The Night Dan Dailey was Dolly Dawn", which pretty well ended his film career, although he continued in television.

Arnold began using the male name of Charles (his father's name) Prince. In 1957 C.V.Prince wrote a paper for *The American Journal of Psychotherapy* where he was introduced by Dr **Benjamin**: "Dr Prince is known to me personally. I have met him in his male as well as his female role. I have had lengthy and stimulating discussions with him. He is highly educated with a fine cultural background". Prince presented three types of 'males' who may share 'the desire to wear feminine attire' (p82), that is homosexuals, transvestites and transsexuals. He was keen to dissipate the confusion of the three, but in its place propagated an alternate myth that 'true transvestites ... are exclusively heterosexual ... Frequently they are married and often fathers'.

He was developing the concept of "femmiphilia" and was talking of his feminine self as "a real personality in her own right". He also proposed "femmegenerator". As he explained to Harry Benjamin (TSPhenomenon:53) the two words are to counteract the popular confusion with homosexuality, and to take the sex out of it. He later wrote up these ideas in a pamphlet: *An Introduction to the Subject of Transvestism or Femmiphilia (Cross-Dressing)*. He no longer thought of himself as the same kind as Christine Jorgensen, and started denouncing sex change operations. One of the first to receive this message was the teenage **Diane Kearny** who naively wrote to him and was told that she was 'delusional' in wanting such.

It was in 1958 that a 19-year-old, who had been taking her mother's estrogen pills, was referred to Dr **Robert Stoller** at the University of California at Los Angeles Medical Center. Stoller took **Agnes** to be an example of testicular feminization syndrome, and arranged for her to have corrective surgery.

In 1959, Virginia Prince established Chevalier Publications (named for D'Eon), and the next year revived *Transvestia*, which was now sold by subscription and later in adult book stores. The cover of the first issue contained the statement: "A privately Printed Magazine with three objectives – (1) To Provide expression for those interested in the subjects of exotic and unusual dress and fashion; (2) To provide information to those who, through ignorance, condemn that which they do not understand; (3) To provide education for those who see evil where none exists."

Louise Lawrence and Edith Ferguson with their more tolerant definitions of transvestite were no longer involved. Joan Thornton complained that Prince had stolen the name *Transvestia*. As in the 1990s with the term 'transgender', Prince took the word 'transvestite' and attempted to restrict its meaning to a narrow group. The first editorial offices of *Transvestia* were in the premises of Cardinal Industries on Pico Boulevard. (Docter: 74-7) Arnold published a revised and enlarged *Chemistry in Your Beauty Shop*, and also his new book, *A Survey of Chemistry for Cosmetologists*.²

While most of the content of *Transvestia* was submitted by readers, Prince used the forum to construct transvestism as he had presented it in his 1957 paper. Much of Lawrence's material, such as bondage and petticoat punishment was never allowed in *Transvestia*, nor was anything that might be deemed

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Charles Lawrence and Edith Ferguson

Charles Lawrence was born in 1906 and died in 1982. He was a transvestite and the name Curt Schuler. There was a brother...

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fetishistic, such as wearing only female underwear. However the first issue January 1960 contained a letter from [William Bessie Beck](#), a noted advocate of petticoat-punishment, and issue #2 had a letter from his wife, and two photographs of Bessie were in issue #4. (Farrer:14-5) #1 also included an In Memoriam to sexologist [David Cauldwell](#) who had died the previous year. From #5 *Transvestia* featured a cover girl. Potential cover girls were asked to supply several photographs and a personal history, and were requested to pay for their page of photographs. The first such was Annette of Idaho. #6 contained a description of the research questionnaire that Prince was doing with Peter Bentler that was finally published in 1972.

Prince did not want to be associated with queens of Bunker Hill who had organized transvestites in Los Angeles only a generation earlier, nor with the transvestite drinking clubs that Edward D Wood was involved in. In particular, transvestites as imagined were never to be homosexual or to desire a sex change. Prince early picked up the new usage of 'gender'. "It is not the sex we are imitating, it is the gender—the quality of expression, the kind of living, the kind of personality that we associate with a lady." In *Transvestia*, Prince repeatedly claimed that gender is between the ears, not the legs. (Hill:58), and argued that whereas homosexuals were 'sexual deviates', transvestites were 'gender deviates'. Prince discouraged the use of established words such as 'TV', 'drag', 'camp' etc as they were associated with homosexuality: 'femmiphilia' (*Transvestia*, 7, Jan 1961) and 'femmepersonation' (*Transvestia*, 12, Dec 1961) should be used instead, and FP be the abbreviation of both words instead of TV. Also in December 1961, Prince claimed, that having coined 'TV', Prince could end its use. The terms 'femmename', 'femmeself', 'femmelife' and 'femmetalk' were also proposed.

Around the same time [Vern and Bonnie Bullough](#) moved to Los Angeles to teach at California State University, Northridge, and shortly afterwards they met Prince, and also became involved with the homophile organization, [ONE, Inc.](#) Vern also became head of the San Fernando Valley chapter of the [American Civil Liberties Union](#) (ACLU)

1959 was also the year that [Jack Doroshov/Flawless Sabrina](#) started his Nationals Pageants, which were drag contests. As local laws almost always prohibited cross-dressing, he would meet with officials and propose a charitable donation, and in return the town would pass a variance to permit the pageant. Usually the town officials did not understand that local people would be performing. In May of that year, at the all-night [Cooper's Doughnuts](#) on Main St, Los Angeles, the LAPD started arresting the queens among the customers, and a riot broke out.



Hose and Heels Club, Lavender Los Angeles: 65

Prince founded the Hose and Heels Club in 1960 for an initial 12 members who all arrived *en homme* at a house attached to a church property and put on their hose and heels simultaneously so that no-one had anything on anyone else. The second meeting, at the home of a member who was a dress designer, was attended by Vern and Bonnie Bullough. Bonnie commented: "There were 12 or 14 cross dressers in attendance who reminded me of a bunch of young girls at a wedding shower, giggling and acting like teenagers". Prince enforced a no alcohol policy. (Docter: 51)

One of the first other columnists in *Transvestia* was [Susanna Valenti](#) of New York, who had a more carefree style. She coined the metaphor the 'girl within' which became popular with Prince and the readers of *Transvestia*.

Hill (60) writes: "Prince recognized that both groups [transvestite and homosexual] shared a common problem with social intolerance and understood that the social gains won by the larger and better organized homophile movement would only benefit her group. In this regard, she called for mutual respect and cooperation while still maintaining that separateness must also prevail in order to build a distinct group identity for heterosexual cross-dressers. My sense is that there was rampant homophobia within the readership and that Prince was quite progressive on the issue of homosexuality, especially given the historical context." Prince did in fact work with homophile activists, Harry Hay and others.

Kate Cummings in Australia discovered *Transvestia* in 1960. "When it arrived I was overwhelmed by the potential wealth of transvestite material available to me by subscribing. There were scientific articles reprinted from learned journals; there was advice on what to wear, how to use makeup, how to act in public; there were letters from transvestites and their wives; there was wish-fulfillment fiction and there were even advertisements for booklets published by Chevalier Publications." Kate was the Cover Girl on Issue #8 as 'Joan from Australia'.³

Although the US supreme Court had ruled in 1958, re an edition of *One Magazine*, also from Los Angeles, that homosexual content is not obscene simply because it is homosexual, and in 1959 the US publisher of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* won his case and its appeal against the US Post Office's censorship, these were not taken to apply to transvestite content. In 1960 Nan Gilbert in New England, a publisher of petticoat-punishment fantasies had had his mail stopped and was fined \$500. In 1961 Tito Valenti (Susanna's male persona) was summoned by postal officials. Two of her correspondents had been charged with mailing obscene materials, and Susanna's name had come up. Tito pleaded respectability and denounced the obscenities. Prince was actually arrested re personal correspondence to another transvestite, who he thought was a woman sympathetic to male cross-dressing, who was already under investigation. Prince pleaded guilty in a plea bargain to sending obscene material through the mail. With a five-year probationary sentence, he was liable to be imprisoned if caught cross-dressed in public. However his lawyer persuaded the court to include educating the public about cross-dressing as part of the probation order. In the next few years Virginia lectured to service clubs in the Los Angeles area and participated in a few medical conferences. *Transvestia* #6 contained the announcement that "Flash ... Important ... Read Carefully .. *Transvestia* has been examined by Postal Inspectors and has not been found to be unmailable". (Docter: 78-80).

[José Sarria](#) ran to be a San Francisco Supervisor in 1961: the first openly transvestite person to run for political office.

Charles Lowman co-published *Postural Fitness: Significance and Variances* in 1960, and *Underwater Therapy* in 1961. Arnold's previous psychiatrist, [Karl Bowman](#), along with Margaret Mead and [Hal Call](#) of the Mattachine Society, appeared in a ground-breaking documentary on San Francisco's KQED television channel, *The Rejected*, about homosexuality. Bowman argued that homosexuality is not a mental illness and should be legalized.

Mr and Mrs Lowman visited Doreen's relatives in England, and Virginia used the trip to contact some English transvestites.

In 1962 Virginia attempted to organize *Transvestia's* readership into a nationwide group. FP (from FemmePersonator) also stood for Full Personality. What was needed was Full Personality Expression (FPE). That was Hellenized into Phi Pi Epsilon in the fashion of university sororities. The Hose and Heel Club became the Alpha Chapter. In *Transvestia* #15 Prince exhorted: "Haven't you all read newspaper reports of police in various cities raiding some home or club and finding a bunch of 'guys as dolls'? What prevents our groups being looked upon the same way? Nothing at all...except Phi Pi Epsilon... when we get organized to the point where we have something to point to with some pride." In subsequent issues its purpose was developed and proposals made on how it would be organized. FPE was for cross-dressers who have gone beyond the novelty of dressing up secretly. Social interaction would be fun, and would foster self-acceptance. "The sorority is here, for those whose development has taken them to the point of FemmePersonation, which differs from simple transvestism in much the same way as being a champion Olympic swimmer differs from

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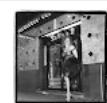
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the person who simply puts on a bathing suit and gets in the pool." Homosexuals, transsexuals and fetishists were not admitted. Soon afterward there were three other FPE chapters: Beta in Chicago, Delta in Cleveland, and Theta in Madison, Wisconsin.

Prince published the first edition of *The Transvestite and his Wife* in 1962, and a first version of the results of his survey questionnaire, "166 men in dresses" was published in *Sexology* magazine. In March Darrell Raynor, in Los Angeles on business, having previously corresponded, met first Charles, and then was invited to dinner to meet Virginia and Doreen. He was chauffeured to the Prince home by Robert Stevens/Barbara Ellen who was also a business associate of Prince (Raynor: chp 1-4).

The program of the Alpha Chapter was two meetings a months. One was formal, without any members being dressed, at which Virginia or an invited psychologist would give a lecture, and serious discussion would ensue. The other meeting was a party, a dress-up affair (Raynor:135).

In 1962, **Elmer Belt** finally discontinued doing sex-change operations at **UCLA Medical School**. That same year, Prince gave a lecture at the UCLA Medical School, which led to being contacted by a psychiatrist at the School, **Robert Stoller**. He was interested in Virginia as a research resource. It was Arnold who appeared for the first session, as per the terms of his parole. Stoller was requested to send a letter inviting Virginia Bruce. However by the time of the second interview Arnolds's parole was ended. From then, for the next for 29 years, Virginia and some other Alpha Chapter members met with Stoller. In Virginia's case the meetings were twice a month and continued until Stoller's death in 1991. These sessions were taped, and some have been transcribed. She was emphatic about the distinction between sex and gender, and both **Vern Bullough** and **Richard Green** affirm that it was Prince's influence that led to Stoller's first two books being called *Sex and Gender, Vol 1: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity*, 1968 and *Sex and Gender, Vol 2: The Transsexual Experiment*, 1974. (Docter: 62-5) Unlike Harry Benjamin and Vern Bullough, Stoller never named Prince in his books, although sometimes there is mention of an anonymous person who would seem to be her.⁴

While in her articles in *Transvestia*, Virginia played down the erotic aspects of cross-dressing, in the conversations with Stoller, she affirmed it. While she denied finding men attractive, she did enjoy being attractive to and flirting with men.⁵ She had a cross-dresser friend who was willing to play the male role and took her for lunch and drinks. Afterward they did mutual masturbation.⁶ She found kissing, hugging and affection from a man to be sexually rewarding. (Docter: 66-7)

Virginia was the major guest at the 1962 Halloween meeting at Susanna Valenti's Casa Susanna in upstate New York. The New York *Transvestia* subscribers had already been socializing with each other meeting in the apartments of Susanna and **Gail Wilde**. The Halloween meeting was also attended by psychologists **Hugo Beigal** and **Wardell Pomeroy** as well as **Darrell Raynor**, **Felicity Chandelle** and **Katherine Cummings**. Katherine Cummings later wrote that Virginia "was argumentative in the extreme. She had very fixed views on transvestism and proclaimed them with great force and no tolerance whatever of opposing views." While previously Susanna had not been in agreement with Virginia's insistence on respectability, they were in agreement in being appalled about one guest who didn't shave and wore a simple nightgown, and even smoked a cigar. Susanna later wrote that such members lacked the cultivation of an 'inner femininity' that distinguished a true transvestite from drag queens and clothing fetishists. (*Transvestia* #19, 1963).

Prince gave a speech that she did not regard herself or any other femmepersonator as emotionally or psychologically ill. Psychologists were not consistent with their research on gender when it came to labeling deviancy: "Further indication of the falsity of this arbitrary division [between genders] is evident in all the tests and devices which psychologists come up with to measure masculinity and femininity 'indexes' in each sex. They therefore give lip service to the presence of masculinity in the female and femininity in the male, but when it comes to practical and actual expression of this (at least on the part of the male) they raise their eyebrows...and start to work 'helping' the individual to 'get back to normal'—to 'adjust himself to society' and, if possible, to stop being what he is.... Femmepersonation as we know it and show it is not a perversion, sex deviation, anomaly, obsession, or similar terms denoting that 'something is wrong'.... It should be made clear that 'statistically uncommon' is not synonymous with 'psychopathological,' and 'culturally impermissible' is not necessarily 'morally reprehensible.' All a true TV or FP is doing is to seek to express some of the values and traits which, when they were drawn from the common human supply depot, so to speak, were arbitrarily assigned to the female." (Also printed in *Transvestia* #19, February 1963; Hill: 310-1)

In the last *Transvestia* of the year, Prince urged co-operation with the homophile movement:

"Whatever the more highly organized homophile community does to improve their lot tends to improve ours and vice versa.... The homophile group is much better organized, larger, and has been at it far longer than we have. Thus where we can assist any general programs they have for breaking down prejudice and legal restrictions, we should do so. Where we can take advantage of any organizations or procedures which they have set up which can be of help to us individually or collectively, we should do so. We should establish and maintain contact with the organizational centers that are maintained by the homophile community, getting from them and giving to them such information and assistance as may be mutually helpful." (*Transvestia* #18, December 1962; Hill: 321)

In early 1963, Virginia fell out with both Barbara Ellen and Evelyn, a best friend for ten years. They started a competing group, and for a while it looked as if the Alpha Chapter would not continue (Raynor: Chp.17-18)

The most famous transvestite in Los Angeles that year was **Miss Destiny** who was featured in **John Rechy's** *City of Night*, and then in *One Magazine* the next year. FPE was only a small and specialized part of the transvestite scene. There were various kinds of trans women at the gay bars on Main Street, from the obvious to the passing. There was even a group for Pacific Islanders. **Rex/Gloria**, was an FPE member, but was also paying for younger trans women to fly to **Dr Burou's** clinic in Casablanca. (Gay LA:114-5) **Edward D. Wood** extended the lead character of his film *Glen or Glenda* in an unlikely direction in his first novel, *Black Lace Drag* (renamed *Killer in Drag*, 1965): Glen is doing contract killings to pay for a sex-change. The same year saw the publication of the transvestite novel *Double Switch*, which is attributed to Virginia Prince.

In New York, **Siobhan Fredericks**, who had quit FPE, started a competing magazine, *Turnabout* and made fun of the many femme* words that Prince had coined, and attracted cross-dressers who were critical of Prince and her ideas. Fredericks started a support group in her home, to which Harry Benjamin sent some of his patients, including **Renée Richards**.

Also new that year was the glossy magazine *Female Mimics*. Performer **Kim August** was on the cover of the first issue, and **Coccinelle** on the second. No statistics are available on how many subscribers to *Transvestia* also read *Female Mimics*. In San Francisco, The Black Cat bar, where José Sarria had performed, was shut down for permitting cross dressing.



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That year Prince delivered her first paper to a professional conference, the [Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality](#) in New York. She differentiated transvestites, transsexuals and homosexuals, introduced the term [feminiphilia](#), explained that most professionals conflate sex and gender, and presented statistics from a 272-member survey that she had analyzed. She presented her group as the vanguard of men's liberation, and denounced aversion therapy: doctors should advise transvestites to accept themselves as they are. "There is no question but that persons with these types of histories [i.e. troubled] do exist and that they turn up in the offices of psychiatrists. Unfortunately, the psychiatrist only sees a specialized sampling of transvestites and therefore the conclusions drawn are based on a biased population of cases. Generally speaking, the only cases that go to a doctor are those that have been sent there by legal authorities, are forced to come by wives or parents, or are quite disturbed by their desires and seek help. The well adjusted, happily married and out-of-trouble transvestite does not go to the doctor, and he is therefore not studied nor counted in the population of cases from which most conclusions are drawn." (*Transvestia* #24, December 1963; Hill:309-310)

In 1964 José Sarria, in San Francisco, was part of the founding of the [Imperial Court System](#), an alternate transvestite sub culture, albeit mainly for gays. Unlike FPE, the imperial Court was able to open branches in Canada and Mexico. With only a few exceptions, FPE and its later successor Tri-Ess and the Imperial Courts did not acknowledge each other. José Sarria's later successor as leader of the Imperial Courts was at that time a Los Angeles sex worker under the name [Lolita](#). She was not of course invited to join the Alpha Chapter. In New York the short-lived [Lavender & Lace](#) magazine for transvestites came out – it had a much greater racial diversity than *Transvestia*. The [Los Angeles Free Press](#) started, which would provide an alternate voice for hippy, gay, trans and other minority voices. Vern Bullough, working with ONE, Inc was successful in getting the San Fernando Valley chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to adopt a policy of protection of homosexuals, transvestites and transsexuals.

[Felicity Chandelle/John Miller](#) was arrested for cross-dressing under an obscure New York law and lost her job: her male persona had been a pilot for Eastern Airlines for 25 years. Prince and Fredericks championed her case, persuaded the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to file a brief and raised over \$1,200 to finance an appeal, which however was denied by the New York appeal court and by the US Supreme Court.

Prince started using Carl Jung's⁷ concepts of 'anima' and 'animus', but with the twist that each of us has both an anima and animus, and that they should be integrated. This need not necessarily be done by cross-dressing.

"There are, however, quite a number of us who have succeeded in recognizing our Anima sides, giving expression to 'her', originally through dressing, and subsequently simply through an integration of our inner selves in our daily lives. Dressing may still remain a very pleasant activity and a source of renewed emotional awareness and may continue with greater or lesser frequency all our lives. The important thing is not necessarily to conquer the dressing but to recognize what it is actually doing FOR us, and recognizing this, to actively attempt a greater degree of integration in our ordinary lives without any guilt feelings. I believe that this is the true goal and virtue of FemmePersonation. (*Transvestia*, 27, June 1964)".

1964 was when *Transvestia* published its first photograph of a black transvestite (Diana, 28, Aug). The next would not be until 1969.

In *Transvestia* #31, February 1965, Prince reacted to Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, not by empathizing with the problems of being a woman, but: "So who is going to write a book on the Masculine Mystique and the frustrations and psychosomatic disturbances that George and Harry have, because they too are trying to live up to an artificial and unsatisfying role forced on them by society? It seems to me that all of you who read *Transvestia* and myself are collectively, so-to-speak, writing such a book."

Also that year, *Chemistry in Your Beauty Shop* was revised again and republished.

Until this point, Prince alone ran the organization out of her home and her work office, collected dues and handled membership applications. There were complaints about autocratic style, and profiting from the dues. Thus Prince appointed [Fran Conners](#), president of the Theta Chapter in Madison, Wisconsin as executive secretary, and Sheila Niles of New Jersey to be field co-ordinator. Niles had a job that involved frequent travel around the US and was able to visit the various chapters. They divided the US, in fact the entire world, into regions, and appointed a regional counselor and deputy for each. The counselors were to encourage the renewal of dues, and also to meet with each new applicant to ensure that they were suitable – however vast distances made face-to-face meetings almost impossible, and some became members without being screened. Like the [Mattachine Society](#) and the [Daughters of Bilitis](#), FPE was a white, middle-class organization with concerns about being respectable. An applicant must purchase five issues of *Transvestia* before applying. This was not just to sell more copies, but also to ensure that he was serious, and that, having read the issues, he was acquainted with the philosophy of femmepersonation. The application asked about sexual orientation, marital status, employment status and cross-dressing history. The applicant had to sign his legal name and write his home address, however these would not be passed on to the regional counselor. He also had to pledge to keep secret all information about other members.

Bonnie and Vern Bullough, visiting the Lowmans at home, noted that Virginia would act as the hostess, reducing Doreen to sort of a maid. (Docter: 37-8)

In 1964 [Reed Erickson](#) founded his Erickson Educational Foundation (EEF), through which over the next twenty years he donated hundreds of thousands of dollars into gay, lesbian, trans and New Age activities such as acupuncture, homeopathy, dolphin communication and altered states of consciousness. He donated to two friends of Prince, [Harry Benjamin](#) and Vern Bullough, and especially to the Los Angeles gay center, [One, Inc](#), but never considered FPE as a suitable recipient.

In May 1965 members of Theta (Wisconsin) joined with members of Beta (Chicago) and Delta (Cleveland) in South Bend, Indiana for a Midwest Conference. However the turn-out was disappointing. Only fourteen FPE members and three wives made it to the event. The Alpha chapter in Los Angeles, although one of the most populous chapters, still had only 18 members.

ONE, Inc split into two competing factions, and Vern Bullough was one of only two people who was able to maintain working relationships with both sides.

In *Transvestia* #36, December 1965, Virginia reaffirmed the lifestyle of part-time cross-dressing:

"I have had the experience, now that Virginia lives as much as she does and gets about everywhere, of having people who know me as Virginia and see me as a relaxed and comfortable woman often say 'why don't you live that way all the time'. They are not thinking of surgery but just of living. Sometimes I am afraid the fascination of this new life gets out of hand and we lose the perspective necessary to enjoy it. When we go too far in the femme-direction we are riding up the other side of the pendulum swing.... So let's not forget that we are all built in a male way and have been brought up in a masculine framework which has its costs but also its compensations and let us say a word for and give a little credit to the 'boy without' as both the source and the support of the 'girl within'. (quoted Hill:172).

By this time Arnold's son, Brent, had come to live with his father and Doreen. He was having personal problems, probably drugs, and his presence added to the stress among the Lowmans. Virginia had been taking dancing lessons and attending public dances. An out-of-town male friend visited and they went dancing all night. (Docter:69) Doreen was also anxious in that Arnold had developed a friendship with a post-operative transsexual, Sherry, and she was concerned that he would go the same route. Virginia and Sherry went to public dances as two women. Doreen moved out, and in with Arnold's parents. Stoller, who counseled both of them, felt that Doreen was "emotionally exhausted" in her struggle over the possibility that Virginia would go full-time. Stoller reported that Prince said he was hurt that Doreen would "just up and walk out on me" – which perhaps implies a lack of empathy. (Docter: 38-40)

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In December that year, Stoller dictated a description of how he saw Virginia, who was then 53:

"It's worth describing Virginia's appearance today which is typical of the way she usually looks: A light brown wig which is not startling but well kept, dangling silver earrings, pancake makeup, sharply red but not extravagant lipstick. On her neck, a necklace made of three strands of large silver balls, pretty garish when taken with all the rest of her appearance, with a V-cut dress out of which peaked the pushed-up bits of breast tissue looking like an old woman's breasts being shown when they shouldn't be with her brassiere showing and the straps showing, the inner side of the two shoulder straps of her dress; the dress, the upper part of it where her bosom is huge and the largeness is increased by a whole bunch of white flowery patterns on on a navy blue background, the lower part is just the navy blue. When she sits with her legs crossed you see up the outside of her thigh quite a long distance, it's not particularly attractive, her knees are bony and her legs although not masculinely muscled are not at all like a woman's; her arms have the muscular contour of a man's, they are very smooth and soft skinned though on her forearms they are darker brown while the upper part is light. I didn't really notice her shoes except that they were high heeled. The overall impression is that if this were in fact a woman, no woman of her age and appearance should show so much of herself and I would think there was something severely wrong in the degree of exhibitionism being revealed." (Stoller#4: 23-4; Docter: 70-1)

1. [Cardinal Industries](#) seems to have disappeared from history. It should not be confused with Cardinal Industries of New York which is a still active and successful company that makes toys. I could not find the name of Arnold's partner in any of the source documents.
2. I do find it strange, given the number of books that discuss Virginia Prince, that no-one previously – except the editors at WorldCat – had bothered to check if there were any book under the name of Arnold Lowman. [Milady Pub. Corp](#) is a real publisher, specializing in books about beauty. It is not a self-publishing like Chevalier Publications.
3. Kate Cummings also volunteered to be and was the cover of *Transvestia* #108, 1983, twenty three years later.
4. For example: *Presentations of Gender*, 1985:137. "For instance, for about twenty years I have had a friendly, more than therapy-oriented relationship with a transvestite man, In that time we have often talked of his childhood, his parents, his parents' personalities, and the relationships among the family members."
5. "While she denies finding men attractive, she does enjoy being attractive to and flirting with men." A subtle difference. I wonder how many cisgendered women could be likewise described. Has anybody done research into heterosexuality using this distinction?
6. Prince: "mutual masturbation ... but never once was there any kind of anal or oral sex .. never". Was Prince unaware that a significant minority of gay men have exactly the same preference?
7. Prince probably related to the fact that Jung, in 1950, had dismissed transsexual surgery as having nothing to do with either medicine or psychology. Carl Gustav Jung, "Zur Frage der arztlichen Intervention" In. *Das symbolische Leben: verschiedene Schriften*. Olten: Walter-Verlag, 1995: 375-6. Quoted in Sander L.Gilman.*Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999:271.

Time: [12:19](#) 

Labels: [ACLU](#), [activist](#), [Benjamin patient](#), [changeback](#), [femmiphilia](#), [FPE-TriEss](#), [Hose and Heel Club](#), [pre-transition marriage](#), [sexologist](#), [Stoller patient](#)

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A Gender Variance Who's Who

Essays on trans, intersex, cis and other persons and topics from a trans perspective.....All human life is here.

This site is the most comprehensive on the web devoted to trans history and biography. Well over 1400 persons worthy of note, both famous and obscure, are discussed in detail, and many mentioned in passing.

There is a detailed **Index** arranged by vocation, doctor, activist group etc. There is also a **Place Index** arranged by City etc. This is still evolving.

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18 March 2013

Virginia Prince: Part III – Femmiphilic activist

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Part V – [Transgenderist dowager](#)
[Jargon terms and general comments](#)

Virginia Prince was an adviser to [Harry Benjamin](#) for his 1966 seminal *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, consulted on the transvestite types, but not on Benjamin's type IV, nonsurgical transsexual, a role that Prince did not adopt until 1968. The three types of transvestite in Benjamin's schema: pseudo, fetishistic and true were a direct reflection of what Prince had been advocating, and left nowhere for gay transvestites, female impersonators nor for female cross dressers. Benjamin proposed a scale or typology divided into six types: Transvestite (Pseudo), Transvestite (Fetishistic), Transvestite (True), Transsexual (Nonsurgical), Transsexual (Moderate intensity), Transsexual (High intensity).

Prince responded with a seven-type scale (Benjamin: 40):

1. Fetishist
2. Low intensity TV
3. True femmiphile TV
4. Asexual type
5. Gender type TS
6. Intensive sexual type TS
7. Operated TS

As the book came out, Mr Lowman was being divorced by Doreen, and was selling his share of Cardinal Industries. He said that he sold it for 10 times his initial investment. Doreen retained more than half of the assets including the house in Nichols Canyon. Arnold moved to a small rented house in Laurel Canyon.¹ Harry Benjamin wrote to the US Passport Bureau in support of Prince's application for a passport in her female name. Without comment the request was granted. (Benjamin:169-170)

The same year [Agnes](#) confessed to Dr Stoller that she had indeed taken external estrogens, and that she was not intersex.

Early that year Prince urged FPE members to remember that homophile advances rebounded in their interest:

"The homophile community is on the march AND on the way to gaining acceptance.... Some of the more narrow minded of our sister TVs see nothing good in anything that homosexuals do, but we ought to remember that their persecution is our persecution and their victory will be our victory too.... So, personally I am all for their success and would cooperate in helping them to achieve it where I could out of pure self interest for our group if nothing else fails. There is, however, the broader interest of helping all minorities toward acceptance." (*Transvestia* #37, February 1966; Hill: 321)

The [North American Conference of Homophile Organizations](#) (NACHO) held its founding convention in San Francisco in August 1966. Prince attended as an observer. "I think it is in order that we keep an observer status in this field and stand by to aid their cause when it will aid ours and to extract from their experiences and their contacts with authorities and influential groups any contacts and opportunities that may be to our advantage."

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) adopted a national policy very similar to the one that Vern Bulough had drafted for the San Fernando Valley chapter, and following the *amicus curiae* brief that they had filed in the [Felicity Chandelle](#) case, that homosexuals, transvestites and transsexuals should be protected.

Prince and several FPE members attended a drag ball. Prince took an informal survey of sixteen drag queens, asking each ten questions that she had pre-devised. She hypothesized that the answers to these questions would distinguish homosexual queens from transvestites. However one of the 16

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answered as if a femmiphilic. Prince informed him of that and introduced him to the FPE members. He later joined FPE. (*Transvestia* #41, October 1966; Hill:399-400).

In August there was a riot between trans women and the police at [Compton's Cafeteria](#) in San Francisco's Tenderloin district.

Another book that came out that year was Myron Brenton's *The American Male*, an early work of men's liberation. Prince felt that Brenton's arguments about masculine mystique, the arbitrary construction of gender norms, and the narrow stereotypes that men felt pressured to follow were much the same as she had been writing about in *Transvestia* for the last six years. She juxtaposed quotes from Brenton with references to her own earlier columns (Hill:390) Prince even spoke up for homosexuals as long as they did not attempt to join FPE: "Nothing is more basic to our insecurities, self-condemnation, and non-acceptance than the problem of homosexuality." (*Transvestia* #41, October 1966; Hill:398)

FPE- Northern Europe was set up on the FPE model for the Scandinavian countries, at the initiative of Annette Hall from Sweden who had met Virginia in the US in the Spring of 1966. In later years it split into separate organizations for each country.

Late 1966 Virginia was interviewed for television in Hawai'i: "I was there as Virginia and was interviewed for about twenty minutes before I was asked what personal interest I had in the field—it had all been professional before that—and I dropped to my masculine voice and confessed all..." (*Transvestia* #42, December 1966; Hill:305-6.

Prince set up meetings with police chiefs and the heads of vice squads.

"I went as Virginia to see the Lt. who was public relations assistant to the Police Chief in San Diego. He then took me to the Lt. in charge of the vice squad. After about 45 minutes with him I left for an appointment with the City Attorney....The reason for my call on them was that San Diego is working on an ordinance which could make the wearing of the clothing of the opposite sex with the intent to commit an illegal act, illegal itself....Both the Lt. and the City Attorney made it clear that if a TV such as myself was just walking the streets, acting like a lady and minding his own business that no law would be being broken because there would be no 'intent'....I urged them to try to get the ordinance through leaving out the clothing as a means to their ends. I don't think I succeeded in selling them on this, but they did admit that I had a point." (*Transvestia* #38, April 1966; Hill:308). She usually started with an inquiry about the city's cross-dressing laws, and then stressed the harmlessness of heterosexual cross-dressers. She was always emphatic that they were different from homosexuals and street queens.²

On the last night of 1966 there was a drag contest at New Faces, a bar on W. Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles. Just before midnight many of the contestants crowded into the [Black Cat](#), just down the street. At the stroke of midnight, as many of the men exchanged a traditional kiss, the LAPD rushed in and beat several customers brutally. They chased two back to the New Faces where they knocked down the woman owner and beat the two bartenders unconscious, one of whom then suffered a ruptured spleen and after recovery was charged with felony assault on a police officer. Six patrons were charged with lewd conduct for kissing, and were all found guilty by a jury. Two of them were later registered as sex offenders. In response, there were organized protests, and the convictions of the two were appealed as far as the US Supreme Court which declined to take the case. This inspired a new periodical, [The Advocate](#), for gay and lesbian (including transvestite) issues. It was at first a Los Angeles publication, and then grew into a national publication. Despite the probability that some of the drag contestants were FPE members, FPE took no notice of the event.

In January 1967 Prince attended a combined party arranged by Theta Chapter (Madison) and Theta Tau (Minneapolis-St Paul). Later that year members of Theta-Tau joined Prince for a visit to the University of Minnesota.

The newly divorced Prince published a new edition of *The Transvestite and his Wife* later that year, a clear re-statement that Prince's organizing is only for heterosexual men. The book is dedicated to Karl Bowman and Harry Benjamin, both of whom had helped Prince. "Through his [Benjamin's] education of other doctors, psychologists, and marriage counselors he has helped many hundreds of transvestites." Prince claimed to have encountered few happier marriages than those in which the wife accepts and participates in the husband's transvestism; fewer more unsatisfactory than those in which the wife rejects it. If a wife should fail to understand, it is an indication of her immaturity stemming from her own unresolved emotional problems. Prince grades wives A-F on how well they understand and accept. "The femmiphile adopts feminine garb as a matter of personal internal expression – the homosexual 'Queen' does so for external effect – to attract males for sexual purposes and to ease the guilt of both."³ "Females can and do wear masculine type clothing so openly and without social disapproval that the desire to do so is not frustrated and does not therefore present a problem."⁴

The British FPE offshoot, *The Beaumont Society* was founded with an initial membership of 7.

In August Prince appeared on the [Irv Kupcinet](#) show in Chicago in a panel with [Paul Gebhard](#), director of the Kinsey Institute who had continued Kinsey's research into transvestites, the black novelist [Richard Wright](#) and a psychiatrist. "'For the first time over the air,' she proudly wrote 'a TV was treated as the intellectual equal of other persons with some stature and not as a sort of curiosity to be taken apart.'" (*Transvestia* #47, October 1967; Hill:306). She received hundreds of letters of inquiry.

[Sir Lady Java](#) was fired from her employment as a performer and waitress at the Redd Foxx Club in Los Angeles. The ACLU, having been persuaded to aid transvestites, challenged the LAPD Rule that applied as unconstitutional. But apparently FPE did nothing. In New York, [Mauricio Archibald](#), in female clothing and on his way home from a party, was arrested on a subway platform and charged under the same obscure law that [Felicity Chandelle](#) had been charged under. Despite his being heterosexual, and despite his obtaining an appeal hearing, no help was forthcoming from either Prince or Siobhan Fredericks.

The final Nationals Pageant, for professional and amateur drag performers, organized by [Jack Doroshow/Flawless Sabrina](#), was held that year in New York as a fundraiser for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. This was filmed, and released the next year as *The Queen*, which became a sensation at the Cannes Film Festival. On this basis Doroshow, obviously openly transvestite, was hired as a special adviser on the films *Midnight Cowboy*, 1969, and *Myra Breckinridge*, 1970.

Prince informed her readers under the title "Life Begins at 54":

"Virginia will be a freer soul now even if she has to crossdress as Charles now and then.... I'm going to do everything that will continue to broaden (literally and figuratively) my experience of life in my closing years. Everything with three specific exceptions that is, I draw the line at homosexuality, transsexuality, and a third marriage." (*Transvestia* #43, 1967)"

The Alpha group had its first open house in November 1967. This became an annual event. City leaders and public officials were invited to a catered dinner and a lecture by Prince. 50 guests turned up the first year. (Hill: 315)



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The December 1967 issue of *Transvestia* was the only one ever to publish a photograph of an east Asian transvestite: Lili, a recent immigrant to New York from Shanghai.⁵

Prince took on a part-time assistant at *Transvestia* at this time. Mary's mother had died in 1966, and she started electrolysis and hormones and gave up her male job with the intention of seeking surgery. However Prince gave her a hard time on the question of surgery. She did however start living full time as female. Her story was published in *Transvestia*, 62, Feb 1970.

From this point on, until 1982, Prince was a full-time activist and lecturer. She traveled across the US, to England, Scandinavia and Australia. She appeared on radio and television, lectured to college classes, gave newspaper interviews, delivered papers at professional conferences, and appeared at local FPE chapter meetings and social functions. Traveling and appearing as a woman in public as this entailed led to her decision in late 1968 to live full time as female. She encouraged members of FPE to contact their local networks to set up potential appearances. Prince appeared on either radio or television shows in San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Denver, Chicago, Madison, Minneapolis, Detroit, Cleveland, Toledo, New York, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Indianapolis, Houston, and Tulsa, among other cities. On these radio and television programs, she promoted her books, the magazine, and Phi Pi Epsilon. In *Transvestia*, she published photographs of herself with television and radio personalities and described her trips in extensive travelogues.

A handful of doctors and mental health professionals responded to Prince's growing reputation by referring transvestite patients to FPE and *Transvestia*. A similar shift had already occurred with homophile patients being referred to gay groups, and as already mentioned, Harry Benjamin had been referring patients to Siobhan Fredericks since 1963.

In 1968, *Transvestia* columnist Sheila Niles popularized the concept 'whole girl fetishist (WGF)' for members who did not pass well enough, particularly if it were for lack of trying. Over the next few years it came to be that those who failed or didn't bother to fashion themselves as truly feminine were fetishistic.⁶ Susanna even estimated that the majority of members were WGFs (*Transvestia* #55, 1969).

From 1968 Prince wrote more columns about transsexuality than about homosexuality and fetishism combined. He strongly resisted the common assumption (endorsed by Harry Benjamin and others) that there was a continuum from fetishism to transvestism to transsexuality. Susanna Valenti held that many transvestites were incipient transsexuals who with the right circumstances would progress to living as women. Dozens within *Transvestia*'s readership were opting for surgery, and it irked Prince that his advice was being ignored: "...the number of persons asking for and achieving it does not make me happy. I am disturbed". (*Transvestia*#50, 1968; Hill, 137) He became quite mean-spirited on the subject, presenting transsexuals as failed individuals: "inadequate, inappropriate, inefficient, and uncomfortable in the masculine gender role and who were also inadequate and unhappy in the male sex role". They had failed at both the sex and the gender of being male. Several times Prince used the crude pun: "While I feel whole, transsexuals feel hole".

FPE continued its policy of not accepting "bondage or masochistic people, amateur investigators, curiosity seekers, homosexuals, transsexuals or emotionally disturbed people". Great emphasis was still placed on privacy and secrecy, and also on involving members' wives.

Annette, whose photograph had been the first cover girl on *Transvestia* #5, invited FPE, as he did most years, to visit his remote ranch in Idaho. Most of the Seattle Chapter went, and Virginia drove up from Los Angeles. Katherine Cummings was present and observed that Virginia managed to alienate most of the wives by telling them that she was just as female as they were. (Cummings: 185).



WBI Boston 1968 with Dr Leo Wollman. Presenter Bob Kennedy

Also 1968, Prince's mother, **Elizabeth Arnold**, died. By this time Prince had had facial hair removed by electrolysis and was taking female hormones again, and had had a legal name change to Virginia Bruce. She took an extensive six-week trip across the US meeting FPE members and even police officers. She emphasized that she took no male clothing with her. On her return she bought a spacious house in the Hollywood Hills. She trained as a glider pilot and purchased an Ultralite aircraft. She also bought a motorhome for her travels in the US.⁷

In August she wrote "My goal achieved" (*Transvestia* #49) about how she had attended a session of the then new nudist therapy led by psychologist **Paul Bindrim**, who had previously spoken at an Alpha Chapter meeting. Prince felt that it was an opportunity to present as Virginia while revealing her male anatomy:

"For about 20 hours I was as naked as the day I was born but for those same 20 hours I was still Virginia to myself and to all the rest. Although there could be no doubt as to my maleness (sex), nobody seemed inclined to doubt my femininity (gender), and I was treated in all respects as one of the girls by men and women alike."

This, of course, created a reaction from her readers. The August issue contained the following letter:

"Most of your readers think that you are everything good about TVism and are the ultimate in FPism and pure in all ways. What your article has done is to plant a great deal of doubt in their minds as to just what you are.... When all this is added to your story of running around in the nude, kissing a man, having him hold you and the other things, no matter what the occasion, I think that a lot of people think you have gone off the deep end. I would think that the GG's who read it would all be set back...because you have given them proof that TVs just don't want to put on a dress to express feminine feeling inside them but really want to go much further, and this is what they fear most"

In the June issue, Prince went so far as to denounce how male roles are connected to violence.

"The male citizen of our American culture, and to some extent but not to the same degree, the males of other western cultures, have elevated the cult of masculinity to the ultimate....In a world that venerates, honors, and rewards masculinity far above femininity and which at the same time equates strength, courage, determination, aggressiveness, and force with masculinity, what can we expect? Men are so frightened, so



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ashamed, so fearful of their gentler instincts and feelings that they shove them aside and elevate the current conceptions of masculinity to the dominant and determining place in their life philosophy. In order to deny femininity, a man will exaggerate masculinity well beyond its proper proportion in human life. What is the result in the world? The continued domination of the masculine ethic of force and violence, of solving problems with wars, pistols, or fists instead of with the head and the heart." (*Transvestia* #51, June 1968; Hill 391-2)

Prince wrote that she completely accepted herself 'genderally'.

'I was then free to live my life as I wanted having no domestic or business responsibilities. I therefore crossed the line completely and have lived as a woman full time ever since' ("Charles to Virginia: Sex Research as a Personal Experience" in Vern Bullough (ed), *Frontiers of Sex Research*: 172).

Despite the no-transsexuals policy, Virginia Prince, as she now was at age 55, was in effect what Harry Benjamin called a non-surgical transsexual, although she would never admit to the term. However Virginia's male persona was resurrected again for a revised version of *A Survey of Chemistry for Cosmetologists*.

1. Laurel Canyon in 1968 had more than its share of both celebrities and of murder. There are two books about the neighborhood: , Michael Walker's Laurel Canyon: *The Inside Story of Rock-and-Roll's Legendary Neighborhood*, 2006. and Dave McGowan's *Inside The LC: The Strange but Mostly True Story of Laurel Canyon and the Birth of the Hippie Generation*, 2008-2012. Neither has anything to say about Prince. In addition to Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix and Frank Zappa as neighbors, there was Ramon Navarro who was murdered in his home by two intruders that very year.
2. Hill:308 commented: "I have found no evidence that indicates what exactly police officials thought about Prince—whether they took her seriously or as a complete joke or as another urban oddity whose voice they, as public servants, were obligated to listen to. Accompanying her many travelogues are photographs of Prince with prominent psychiatrists, doctors, and radio and television personalities. It may be telling that there is not one photograph of Prince posing with a police chief or law officer."
3. However, see footnotes 5 and 6 in Part II. Prince admitted to Stoller that attracting the attention of men was something that she specifically enjoyed.
4. *Sex Changes: The Politics of Transgenderism* was written by Patrick Califia before transition. Its section on Prince is based solely on a careful and insightful reading of *The Transvestite and His Wife*. "But this putative 'difference' between male and female sexuality has more to do with the repression of women's sexuality in general ... than a shift in couture. I know what I feel when I am in male drag. My conversations with other women who cross-dress as men make it clear that I am not the only woman who gets a sexual rush out of appropriating a masculine image. A whole book could probably be written about the misogyny and homophobia that has led sexologists and other 'experts' to frequently state, as Prince does, that women can wear men's clothes without being punished, so they have no need to become transvestites. This is patently false. ... As any stone butch or passing woman can tell you, the general public continues to be deeply disturbed by a biological female who appears in public in men's clothing. There is no difference between the discrimination, condemnation, and violence that is routinely inflicted upon male and female cross-dressers, if they are exposed as such."
5. Lili took up with Susanna Valenti, and can be seen several times in *Casa Susanna*, 2005.
6. The FPs felt about the 'whole girl fetishists' in much the same way that not-TG persons today feel about those who do not pass, and whom they call 'transgenders'.
7. Perhaps Prince was affluent after selling 50% of Cardinal Industries; or perhaps his mother left a bequest.

Time: 15:20 

Labels: ACLU, activist, airplane pilot, Benjamin Associate, Benjamin patient, femmiphilia, FPE-TriEss, men's lib, sexologist, typology

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A Gender Variance Who's Who

Essays on trans, intersex, cis and other persons and topics from a trans perspective.....All human life is here.

This site is the most comprehensive on the web devoted to trans history and biography. Well over 1400 persons worthy of note, both famous and obscure, are discussed in detail, and many mentioned in passing.

There is a detailed **Index** arranged by vocation, doctor, activist group etc. There is also a **Place Index** arranged by City etc. This is still evolving.

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21 March 2013

Virginia Prince: Part IV – Full-time Living

- Part I – Youth and First marriage
- Bibliography
- Part II – Second Marriage
- Part III – Femmiphilic activist
- Part IV – Full-time Living
- Part V – Transgenderist dowager
- Jargon terms and general comments

In 1969, Prince used the term 'transgenderal' in an article for *Transvestia*. This was a one-off usage that she never repeated. She commented on the **Stonewall Riots** as being the inevitable consequence of a group being oppressed by society.(Hill: 401). The leader of the Gamma Chapter in Boston discontinued on obtaining surgery: **Ariadne Kane** stepped forward and with others restructured and relocated the group under a new name, the Cherrystone Club. In London **Jean Fredericks** and **Ron Storme** started organizing drag balls, mainly at the Porchester Hall.

In the same year Prince visited the UK for the first International Conference on Gender Identity in London, organized by the Albany Trust and the Erickson Foundation, and to visit the Beaumont Society. She visited members in Scotland and Leicester, and there was a formal dinner in London with 9 members and three wives, and she returned again in 1971. By then **Charlotte Bach** was living full-time a female, and writing a theory of transvestity that was completely different from anything that Prince ever wrote. It is a shame that they did not meet. Nor apparently did Prince attend any of the Porchester Balls.

H. Taylor Buckner, of Sir George Williams University, Montréal, presented a paper at the American Sociological Association annual meeting in San Francisco that drew on the data about 272 transvestites that Prince had presented in 1963. However he also drew on the biography of the fetishist and bondage transvestite **Leonard Wheeler**, and concluded that transvestism is a socially induced pathology.

In 1970 Prince visited Sydney, NSW, to kickstart what evolved into the **Seahorse Society**. Rosemary Langton, who had recently immigrated from the UK, had been a member of the Beaumont Society. She contacted some others by mail and then they advertised in the *Daily Telegraph* and then the rather bawdy *King's Cross Whisper*.

Susanna Valenti's last regular column for *Transvestia* was in 1970. She announced she also was going to start living full time as female.



1970. Hill p406
identity, to gain a modicum of understanding and to escape the opprobrium (albeit unfairly) that society lavishes on the homosexual."

In May Prince was in the meeting at the American Psychiatric Association in San Francisco when it was zapped by gay and feminist protesters: "Between them they created so much noise, confusion and disturbance that the chairman had to dismiss the session. It was a frightening premonition of things that may lie ahead for this nation when even a professional group like that of the psychiatrists can have their meeting disrupted by the radical wing of various minority groups". (*Transvestia* #62, 1970; Hill 401n47)

Prince took out a membership in the National Organization for Women (NOW), and encouraged her readers to support its work, but clarified that she did not mean the radical women's lib which got the media attention. After two years of living as a woman, second-class citizenship "was now my problem as it is the problem of all women, even when they don't realize it. My interest in the movement has since become more personal and less intellectual."(*Transvestia* #63, 1970; Hill 394-5).

Despite Prince's proscription, 'transvestite' and 'TV' continued to be used elsewhere, and also kept creeping back into *Transvestia*. In *Transvestia* 62, 1970, she urged that the usage stop:

"It was bad enough when misguided and ignorant reporters used it in the press when referring to drag queens. But when the queens themselves appropriate it and use it in reference to themselves because they are, after all, crossdressers and because we have managed to give the word some respectability and dignity, then I for one have had it. I have spent 10 years trying to educate both my readers and the public to the fact that heterosexual crossdressers are a separate breed of cat. It is the only way to establish our

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Hill who has examined the original *Transvestia* proof files found that many of them feature pen marks where 'TV' or 'transvestite' is replaced by femmepersonator etc (p148). This presumably is Prince acting as editor.

Around 1970 three transvestite novels were published by Chevalier Publications: *From Martin to Marion*, *The Turnabout Party* and *The Birth of Barbara*. They are attributed to Prince, and they and others are advertised at the back of *How to be a Woman Though Male*.

Prince's *How to be a Woman Though Male*, 1971, was an advice book very different from Pudgy Robert's *Female Impersonator's Handbook*, 1967 or Michael

Salem's *How to Impersonate a Woman: A Handbook on Makeup & Dress for the Male Transvestite*, 1973. Prince's book is notable for its old-fashioned ideas of femininity, as if the counter-cultural and feminist changes of the time had never happened. It contains extensive and detailed advice on how to walk, sit, stand, run, eat, drink, and so on, "like a woman". One piece of general advice is "try to be more gentle, less direct, less forceful, and more delicate and graceful in your movements". "If you are nervous about how adequate you look upon entering the inner room you can buy considerable authenticity by going over to the Kotex or Fems dispenser which is usually on the wall at one end and spend a dime for a pad and take it with you into the booth" (p141) and "It is often overlooked or unknown to males that the female urinary stream not being focused as it were into a narrow stream by passing through a pipe (penis) before leaving the body tends to spray out and to hit the water in the bowl in a much bigger stream than a male urinary stream. For this reason it makes considerably more sound. A male sitting on the seat will have a thin stream falling only a few inches and will not therefore make a usual sound. While most of the time this might be of no importance, if you feel any qualms about your authenticity you might be well advised to make much the same sound as the other females. This can be accomplished by standing up, facing the door, and straddling the bowl with feet not too far back (this would seem strange to anyone in the neighboring booth). Aim the stream right into the pool of water and let go. The greater length of fall will allow the stream to spread out and make more noise." (p142) She also gives advice on how to avoid the then common 10¢ charge to use toilets. "It is the best in womanhood that the FP seeks to emulate, not the common. Be the LADY in the crowd if you are going to be a woman at all, not the scrubwoman or a clerk. It is the beauty, delicacy, grace, loveliness, charm and freedom of expression of the feminine world that you are seeking to experience and enjoy, so 'live it up' – be as pretty, charming and graceful as you can." (p137)

In the same year, FPE member Carol Beecroft split off and founded *Mamselle Sorority* with a more open membership policy. In London Rachel Pollack and Roz Kaveney were organizing a transvestite presence at the Gay Liberation Front Meetings.

A wife of a new member discovered what her husband was up to, and wrote the following to another member whom her husband has been corresponding with. The second member passed it onto Prince who published it:

"You are sick and are in very bad need of professional help. As you don't know, I am a nurse and we put people like you in an insane asylum or on the psycho ward in the hospital. I know my husband must have answered that ad by the reference to your letter but no letter from you or your B+ wife could convince me what you're doing is normal. You'd better seek help from a Professional Doctor or find an old fashioned altar and pray to God for his saving power to save you from a Devil's Hell. That would be the best fulfillment you or your 'sisters' could ever get. I hope and pray if you ever 'dress' again there will be a Policeman close by to nab you and 'undress' you in front of so many people it will make you feel as low as an animal.... No, your wife had better not write to me for what you do is your business and I am an F or Z wife and I won't ever believe anything could convince me to believe what you're doing is right. If my husband desires this kind of life he has my blessing with a divorce. I wouldn't want to expose our daughter to anything so disgusting." (*Transvestia* #70, 1971. Hill: 257)

In 1971 Charles Lowman was named Doctor of the Century by the Los Angeles County Medical Association. In August that year the Alpha Chapter hosted Lady Java, who had been in the press for trans activism in 1967 – and were thus more accepting than Virginia. At the same time the Gamma Chapter in Boston was doing outreach to the local gay community. Dot from Gamma spoke to a meeting of the Homophile Union of Boston with much success, and then to the local chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis.

Prince's paper with P.M. Bentler, "A Survey of 504 Cases of Transvestism" in *Psychological Reports*, 1972, followed on from Louise Lawrence's work in the 1940s and 1950s bringing non-patient transvestites to the attention of doctors. Prince and Bentler surveyed 504 crossdressers, mainly readers of *Transvestia*. 66% had never seen a psychiatrist.

A count was made that year by Fran Connors of all FPE members, past and present. The total came to 1,800. This would be comparable to the size of the pre-Stonewall homophile groups. Each of the Chapters had the right to suspend members who were security risks "in the opinion of the majority of chapter members". Hill, however, comments that: "The organizational literature, however, indicates that local chapters were plagued more by drop-outs—the revolving door syndrome—rather than suspended members. Many crossdressers, much like their homophile counterparts in Mattachine and Daughters of Bilitis, used the magazine *Transvestia* and the organization as a source of information and entrée into the larger subculture. They bolted once they got what they needed or developed peace of mind." (Hill: 284)

In *Transvestia* #74 Prince wrote "...we are the vanguard of Men's Liberation in that we have met and made friends with that woman formerly locked away in the dungeons of our psyche". However the pro-feminist Men's Liberation movement of the early 1970s did not acknowledge any contribution by Prince.¹

1972 was also the year that Fran Connors, who was recognized as having built up the organization over the last seven years, resigned as executive secretary of FPE and as the editor of *Femme Forum*. Fran's replacement was Donna from Los Angeles. However, Donna suffered from ill health and *Femme Forum* did not survive beyond the end of the year. Prince had that year reiterated the basic philosophy of the group: "FPE was organized to serve one kind of person only....heterosexual, single and family people with jobs, reputations and responsibilities....and to do it in a context of concern for that person's personal, marital and reputational well-being" (*Femme Forum* #33, January 1972). Other groups, that were less exclusionary were referred to as 'open groups'. The next year Prince announced that FPE was no longer a non-profit organization, but was now to be an adjunct of Chevalier Publications. All membership dues were now to go to her and were now raised to \$12. Hill (296) speculated that there was a mass exodus of members to the other open groups at this time. For the next few years the national organization was minimal. Prince started issuing a directory listing the femme-name, code, city and state, marital status, religion, wife's attitude, degree of dressing, and hobbies of each active member. But not mailing addresses. Contact could be initiated with others only through *Transvestia*'s contact forwarding service at \$1 a time.

Charles Lowman married his second wife, Mary, in 1972. This wife was not sympathetic towards her stepson. Prince, in male drag, made a rare appearance at their home but was not invited inside. (Docter:17)

By now Angela Douglas had founded Transsexual Action Organization (TAO) and was actively campaigning in Los Angeles. I could find no record of Prince and Douglas even acknowledging each other. In New York Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P Johnson were organizing transvestites with STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries); the scene that was to become the voguing balls of the 1980s was evolving.

By 1973 Prince was urging her readers to read Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, and to subscribe to *MS* magazine.

"Learn exactly how women are tied down and suppressed by the male organized culture. When you have learned something of that you will be better able to understand what's inside your wife's head." She took the side of an unhappy wife who wrote to complain that although she accepted her husband's cross-dressing, he did not reciprocate by trying to understand her. ...

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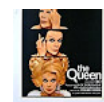
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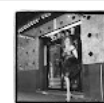
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Logan Carter (19: model, performer

"What is ridiculous is that he [the husband] sees women as beautiful creatures that have lots of time to kill and just lay around reading or doing their nails, or going out shopping, etc. ... Is it any wonder then, that in a lot of cases after several years of trying to understand and to accept the idea that men have a need to express their femininity as women do their masculinity, that she gets a bit fed up with seeing what his concept of femininity is?" (Transvestia #78, 1973; Hill:397)

In her 1973 paper "Sex vs Gender" just after Fisk had proposed the re-medicalizing concept of 'gender dysphoria syndrome', Prince argued for a distinction from 'sexual dysphoria syndrome':

"I was pleased to have Dr. Fisk use the term 'gender dysphoria syndrome,' but if it is truly a matter of gender dysphoria, why do you not offer a gender solution instead of a sexual one? What you really have is a 'sexual dysphoria syndrome.' We have sexual identity clinics in which people are examined, selected, screened, and finally have surgery performed on them which changes their sexual identity ... It seems a very sad thing to me that great many individuals have to go to the expense, pain, danger, and everything else when they could achieve a gender change without any of it."

In 1974 Vern and Bonnie Bullough organized a conference in Los Angeles under the auspices of the Institute for the Study of Human Resources (ISHR, associated with ONE and sponsored by [Reed Erickson](#)) which brought together Prince, Christine Jorgensen, [Zelda Suplee](#), [Laud Humphries](#), Christopher Isherwood and Evelyn Hooker. [Nicole Ramirez](#), the Empress of the Imperial Court of San Diego, rode in San Diego's first Pride parade in an open vehicle amid jeers from hostile spectators.

1974 was also what Doctor refers to as 'The Revolt of the Alpha Chapter'. Virginia had always been autocratic and made the chapter do things her way. She was also often looking for ways to get rich quickly. When the members found that she had given a list of their male names and addresses to a gold and silver broker they were furious. Many of them broke away and the next year formed the [Crossdressers Heterosexual Intersocial Club](#) (CHIC), which is still going. Virginia resigned during a angry confrontation over the broker. The Chapter reformed without Virginia: ² (Doctor:85-7).

Charles Lowman received from President Nixon the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#) in 1974. In 1975, 1,200 people honored Dr Lowman at the Hollywood Palladium. A message of tribute was sent by President Ford. Dr Lowman had treated over 210,000 patients during his lifetime. There is no mention that Virginia was present or even invited. ³

Ariadne Kane and other members of the Cherrystone Club organized the original [Fantasia Fair](#) in Provincetown, Massachusetts which was to become an annual event.

Virginia's son Brent, who had by then become a husband and father, was arrested for burglary March 1, 1976. He was held at the jail ward of the Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center to be medically examined for heroin addiction. He died there on October 30, 1976. He was 30 years old.

Prince published *Understanding Cross Dressing* in the same year, and, as Arnold, published the final revised and enlarged *Chemistry in Your Beauty Shop*.

Vern Bullough and other members of ONE, Inc finally published their [An Annotated Bibliography of Homosexuality: In Two Volumes](#), which contained the largest bibliography of transvestite and transsexual material available at that time. Apparently there was no input from FPE. The gay bibliography was later expanded by Wayne Dynes; the trans by [Dallas Denny](#).

Carol Beecroft had returned to Prince's views about membership, and *Mamselle Sorority* and the FPE were merged and renamed the Society for the Second Self, or 'Tri-Sigma'. Several of Carol's concepts such as *Femme Mirror* magazine and *Holiday En Femme* became part of the Tri-Sigma program. Beecroft had the time and energy to run a national organization. From 1977 the annual dues were set at \$20. The policy of barring homosexuals, transsexuals and fetishists was continued. Aspiring members now had to purchase and read only three issues of *Transvestia*, or alternatively, *Understanding Cross Dressing*. Hill (299) suspects that this is when the interview requirement for new members was suspended, but was unable to find confirmation.

Despite urging her readers in earlier years to read Greer and Friedman, Prince could still write the following in 1977: "while a man's world and a woman's world can be toted up on a scoreboard and on any given item one or the other will have an advantage or a specific disadvantage, when the total score is taken into consideration, things are about equal." As Hill comments, "missing from Prince's avocation of free gender expression were analyses of economic and power differentials between men and women". ("I'm Glad I Wasn't Born a Girl," *Transvestia* #91, 1977; Hill:398). In the same issue she commented on the [Anita Bryant](#) attempt in Dade County to roll back gay rights. "There is a wave of reaction under way in this country today and you ought to be aware of it....Thus if the anti-gay rights movement is successful, you can expect a lot less freedom for yourself, too. Remember that as far as society is concerned, FPs are the same as gays....Thus you don't have to be gay to take the position that they, too, have a right to live, to have a job, to be able to rent an apartment, and the other things that the Miami ordinance attempted to guarantee them." ("Persecution of Minorities," *Transvestia* #91, 1977; Hill:401)

In London, the TV/TS Group, mainly run by [Yvonne Sinclair](#) had been started.

Charles Lowman died in 1977 at the age of 97 after a minor cerebrovascular thrombosis. He died in the institution that he had founded in 1922. Prince dressed in a male suit one last time for the funeral. (Doctor:17)

In 1978 the *Archives of Sexual Behavior* published Prince's "Transsexuals and Pseudotranssexuals" in which she proposed that the only true transsexuals are asexual, socially-inadequate men who would function better as women, as "less is expected of women". She presumed that bisexuals (2,3,4 on the Kinsey scale) of their nature do not become transsexuals. She also proposed two kinds of 'pseudotranssexual' based on sexual orientation.

"The preoperative homosexual group (Kinsey 5,6) gave much higher scores on all questions dealing with sex and lower scores on those questions dealing with gender, while those in the heterosexual group (Kinsey 1,2) gave high scores to gender type questions and much lower scores on the sex type questions".

This model was later taken up by Ethel Person, and anticipates the two-type system that will later be developed by Freund and Blanchard, although neither of them ever refer to it, with the important difference that Freund and Blanchard see the heterosexual group as erotically based.

Also in 1978 the Boston group, the *Cherrystone Club* split into the *Mayflower Club* and the *Tiffany Club*. Ariadne Kane was interviewed by Boston's [Gay Community News](#) and used the term 'transgender'. Prince was introduced by Ariadne Kane to this term, which was not new but was being increasingly used. Prince then used the term in "The Transcendents or Trans People", a paper read to the *Western Regional Meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex* in Santa Barbara, June 1978, reprinted in *Transvestia* 95.

"The second class [transgender] is a group of which I am a member and about which most of you haven't heard ...These are people who have adopted the exterior manifestations of the opposite sex but without any surgical interventions. Thus they are what may be rightly termed 'male women'."

Prince used 'transgender' a couple of times more in *Transvestia* magazine, and then once and once only in a paper, "Charles to Virginia: Sex Research as a Personal Experience" for [Vern Bullough's](#) *The Frontiers of Sex Research*, 1979. After that she lost interest in the word, and stopped using it. In



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"Charles to Virginia" she continued the specious claim from 20 years before that "This name [transvestism] was coined [by Hirschfeld] specifically for heterosexual persons but, unfortunately, of recent years it has come to be used by many people to refer to anyone who cross-dresses for whatever reason". She explained that "Although I personally try to dissuade people from having the surgery, except in special cases, it is interesting that three of my best girl friends are former men who have had the surgery". She considered that the four of them had reached an ideal state: "When one person is androgenous [sic] (gynandrous) and has access to both the masculine and feminine parts of one total person, he or she is not so in need of another person to fulfill life. This unification of the duality of masculine and feminine in one person is what make people like the four us is self-sufficient."

Vern Bullough's message at this time was mixed. Ten years after Prince had gone full time, in his introduction to Prince in *Frontiers of Sex Research*, he still described Prince as a transvestite who "dresses up" as a woman. In his *Homosexuality, a History*, in his "Cross-Dressing: Transvestism, Transsexualism, and Homosexuality" chapter he describes Prince as a good example of a heterosexual transvestite. Some would say that by the logic of book's title it should not have even discussed Prince. He also mentions Chevalier d'Eon, *Lili Elvenes (Elbe)* and Christine Jorgensen who were not homosexual either. And having done so it does not mention even one gay transvestite or even one androphilic transsexual. However he does say: "Though no large-scale study exists of homosexual transvestites, our own preliminary work in this area indicates that such people do exist, and for many of the same reasons as the heterosexual transvestites". He further disagreed with Prince saying: "Probably transsexualism and transvestism exist on a continuum".

Also the year that Prince first met [Richard Docter](#), a colleague of Vern Bullough at Northridge University, when she gave a talk there.

Other than to her three friends, Prince was still being mean-spirited on the topic of surgery. A reader wrote: "I am sorry I have to disagree strongly on what you wrote to me. Transsexuals (me, personally) are NOT gay or homosexuals. They have the mind of a woman, and think and want to satisfy a man like a woman does." Prince replied (*Transvestia*, 94, 1978; Hill:140): "Can you believe that? How do you manage to NOT be homosexual when you want a hole so that you 'can satisfy a man the way a woman does'?"

In the special 100th edition of *Transvestia*, the last one edited by Prince, Susanna Valenti returned to comment on all that had been accomplished since the first issue in 1960. She was impressed by the achievements of homosexuals, transsexuals and women, but pointed out that transvestites had done less well.

"A good number of people, many more than there were one hundred issues ago, know about us. The moral 'liberation' of our times seems to have helped somewhat, too. But, we ask ourselves, have we really become liberated? Have we really become understood? Accepted? Our transsexual sisters are willing to meet the cameras, to make the headlines, but we are not quite willing to follow the example of GG's and transsexuals and gays. We are still at the bottom of the acceptance totem pole....We are letting the revolution pass us by, while we timidly hope that the GG's, transsexuals, and gays will win their battle so that we can gather a few crumbs from their banquet. We can count with the fingers of one hand the number of TV's...who have dared a break-through in radio, television, and other organizations. The rest of us sit back silently and do nothing but wish that something, somebody, would do something for our liberation." (*Transvestia* 100, 1979: Hill: 328)

In July 1979, Prince sold Chevalier Publications to Carol Beecroft, who also took over the editorship of *Transvestia*, and became the sole president of Tri-Sigma. In twenty years Prince had published some 120 life histories from readers and 300 letters to the editor. With only a few exceptions, these readers were white male middle-class heterosexuals usually aged between 30 and 60 (Hill: 30).

The third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders was issued in 1980. Homosexuality, after a long and loud campaign, had finally been removed. But transvestism was now added. In DSM-III-R, 1987, it was renamed 'Transvestic Fetishism'. As Prince had advocated, Transvestism was defined as done by heterosexual males. Cross-dressing was not regarded as a transvestism when done by women or gay men. However, presumably to her chagrin, the psycho-analytic tradition that heterosexual transvestism was a fetish was accepted.

In the same year, Vern and Bonnie Bullough moved to the State University of New York at Buffalo.

In 1981, the national college sorority called [Sigma Sigma Sigma](#), dating from the 1890s, having discovered Tri-Sigma and making noises about possible litigation, Beecroft changed the name of Tri-Sigma to Tri-Ess. *Transvestia* failed shortly afterwards, although *Femme Mirror* continued. Beecroft subsequently gave responsibility for Tri-Ess to [Jane & Mary Fairfax](#), a husband and wife, in Houston, (Docter:82-3)

In 1982, Marcia Ann Lowman, Brent's wife, [lost her appeal](#) against the dismissal of her complaint for wrongful death in the case of her husband, in that such a complaint cannot be maintained against a public entity and she was not able to truly name any individual involved. ⁴

1. See for example Jack Nichols' *Men's Liberation: A New Definition of Masculinity*, 1975, which was probably the book most likely to do so. It does have a chapter on psychological androgyny, but nothing on the topics that Prince would raise.
2. Docter does not give a date for 'The Revolt of the Alpha Chapter'. I took the year from the CHIC website.
3. Virginia Prince like [Roberta Cowell](#) had a father who was one of the outstanding doctors in his own country. And neither father has a Wikipedia page.
4. There is no mention that Virginia aided Marci in her case re Brent's death.

Time: 19:50 

Labels: [activist](#), [Beaumont Society](#), [femmiphilia](#), [FPE-TriEss](#), [Seahorse Society](#)

No comments:

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[Rex/Gloria \(-1970\) business](#)

A Gender Variance Who's Who

Essays on trans, intersex, cis and other persons and topics from a trans perspective.....All human life is here.

This site is the most comprehensive on the web devoted to trans history and biography. Well over 1400 persons worthy of note, both famous and obscure, are discussed in detail, and many mentioned in passing.

There is a detailed **Index** arranged by vocation, doctor, activist group etc. There is also a **Place Index** arranged by City etc. This is still evolving.

In addition to this most articles have one or more labels at the bottom. Click one to go to similar persons. There is a full list of labels at the bottom of the right-hand sidebar. There is also a search left. Enjoy exploring!

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25 March 2013

Virginia Prince: Part V - Transgenderist dowager

Part I – Youth and First marriage
Bibliography
Part II – Second Marriage
Part III – Femmiphilic activist
Part IV – Full-time Living
Part V – Transgenderist dowager
Jargon terms and general comments

In 1985 Virginia and Christine Jorgensen appeared in Lee Grant's documentary, *What Sex Am I?* Dorothy Marie Shepherd, Arnold's first wife, died the same year.

This was also the year that the Clarke Institute in Toronto published *Gender Dysphoria* which laid out the dichotomy between heterosexual [autogynephilics](#) and 'homosexual transsexuals'. While this corresponded to Prince's insistence that homosexuals and femmiphics were, to use her term, "separate breeds of cat" there is no record that I have found of either [Kurt Freund](#) and [Ray Blanchard](#) of the Clarke on one side or Virginia Prince on the other discussing how femmiphilia and autogynephilia are different or similar, although later writers see them as two aspects of the same thing.

[Frederick Whitam](#) published his *Male Homosexuality in Four Societies* in 1986. He argues that homosexuality and transvestic homosexuality are as natural as heterosexuality and occur in all societies, and homosexuals in general tend to patterns of early cross-gender behavior. He sees heterosexual transvestites as a different category and protests their appropriation of the word 'transvestite'. "Some heterosexual transvestites, not wanting to be identified as being homosexual, have insisted that they are the 'true transvestites' and take a demeaning attitude towards drag queens and female impersonators". (p80) We now had three solitudes that should have been talking to each other, but did not.

IFGE (*International Foundation for Gender Education*) was founded by Merrisa Sherrill Lynn in 1987, initially as an outgrowth from Boston's *Tiffany Club*. Although proclaimed as a group for both transsexuals and transvestites, they built in a heterosexual transvestite bias by creating a Virginia Prince Award, and, apparently with no sense of irony, actually awarded the first one to Virginia Prince. The next two went to Merrisa Sherrill Lynn and [Ariadne Kane](#).

Richard F. Docter published his *Transvestites and Transsexuals: Toward a Theory of Cross-Gender Behavior* in 1988. He gathered data from 110 male transvestites. He found that even after excluding those who were exclusively gay, 28% of the rest had some sexual experience with men. He purports a 5-part typology for heterosexual transvestites: fetishism, fetishistic transvestism, marginal transvestism, transgenderism and secondary transsexualism. He conceives these as stages which an individual can progress through. He has a 4-part typology for homosexual transvestites: primary transsexualism, secondary transsexualism, "so-called drag queens" and female impersonators. This is not a progression in the same sense. He treats Prince as one source among many and does not indicate that he knows her personally. Certainly he does not stick to her usage of the term 'transgender', although he credits Prince with coining it in her *Understanding Cross Dressing*, 1977 (but without giving a page reference and Google Books [Search](#) is unable to find it). He notes that his 'transgenderism' category corresponds to Benjamin's Type IV, Nonsurgical Transsexual. According to the diagram on p25, it is an heterosexual variation as in Prince, but Docter discusses only one example, a then 22-year-old Everett/Angela who is androphilic, sexually active and will probably shortly have transsexual surgery. (p21-5)

[Robert Stoller](#) died in a traffic accident in 1991. His wife returned the tapes and transcription of their 29 years of sessions to Virginia, who later passed them on to Docter for his biography.

By 1992, Yvonne Cook-Riley (who was awarded the Virginia Prince Award in 1995) was lobbying for the use of 'transgender' within IFGE, and would later, with willful ignorance, claim that she and Prince had created the 'transgender community'.

In 1993 [Vern and Bonnie Bullough](#) returned to Los Angeles after his retirement. Vern again taught at Northridge as an adjunct professor until 2003. Their new book, *Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender*, while totally ignoring [Reed Erickson](#) and [April Ashley](#), reducing [Lou Sullivan](#) to an erotic cross dresser, and refusing to give [Jacqueline Dufresnoy](#)'s female name, builds up the importance of Prince. They claim that Prince was the only transvestite organizer of note from 1952 to the 1980s. They do see through Prince's claims: "Prince's quest for respectability led her to exclude cross dressers who were homosexuals, sadomasochists, women, prostitutes, or even partial cross dressers. Because the psychiatrists accepted Prince's definition of transvestism and incorporated it into the DSM-III-R, behavioral scientists, including the authors, blindly followed the accepted definition by studying club members as if they were the universe

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Two places in the face of a transgenderist



Charlaque was born in 1961 to a transgenderist and the name Curt Schöneberg. There was a brother

of cross dressers." (p302) They follow with a summary of Frederick Whitam's work in the third world, but do not name any European or North American gay transvestites. The organizing work by [Sylvia Rivera](#) in New York or of [Rachel Pollack](#) or later [Yvonne Sinclair](#) in London is certainly not mentioned, and, as I have mentioned before, there is a recurring pattern in Bullough's work of not mentioning either transvestites or transsexuals who have a male lover or spouse. The Bulloughs, despite knowing Prince personally, do not claim she coined 'transgender', or even associate her with the word at all. They do use the word when referring to Ariadne Kane. The Bulloughs note "Originally, we planned to publish Virginia/Charles's original name, but she regards this part of her past as a closed book she would rather not reopen." (308n5)

The internet forum, [alt.transgendered](#), was launched 1992, did not even mention Prince until 1995 when Kimberleigh Richards, editor of *Cross-Talk*, entered to promote Prince as a pioneer of 'transgendered', but with almost no success.

Prince sold most of the remaining copies of *Transvestia* and the copyright on her major books to Sandy Thomas, an old colleague. There are now available along with Thomas' transvestite fantasy titles from [Lulu.com](#).

By 1996, the claims by Cook-Riley and Richards that Prince had coined 'transgender' were becoming widely known, and were repeated without citation in [Leslie Feinberg's](#) *Transgender Warriors*: "But the word transgender is increasingly being used in a more specific way as well. The term *transgenderist* was first introduced into the English language by trans warrior Virginia Prince. Virginia told me, 'I coined the noun *transgenderist* in 1987 or '88. There had to be some name for people like myself who trans the gender barrier' (p x) ". This is her only appearance in the book: Feinberg does not care to demonstrate Prince as a 'trans warrior'. This seems to be the major source from which people claim that Prince coined the word. However there is no record of Prince using the word in 1987/8. This led to mainstream, albeit uncritical, acceptance of the claim.¹

The same year, Prince published "Gender Fundamentalists" in Richards' *Cross-Talk*, where she rejected the inclusions that IFGE and Feinberg had been putting out in her name and reasserted her separatism and her transgenderphobia. "It is strange but true that the ones who are most vocal, most in print and most publicly active are the transsexuals. Their main point of attack is Tri-Ess because of the policy (which in their anointed wisdom they like to term "exclusionary") of selecting heterosexuals only, which conflicts with what they proclaim to be the only right way for a group to be ... open to all comers." Prince is complaining that transsexuals are trying to include her and her group in an umbrella.

Bonnie Bullough died, just before the publication of *Gender Blending* edited by herself, Vern and James Elias. The tome is inclusivist except for the contributions by Prince and Kimberleigh Richards. In "Seventy Years in the Trenches of the Gender Wars" Prince actually claims: "As a matter of fact, I coined the words 'transgenderism' and 'transgenderist' as nouns describing people like myself who have breasts and live full time as woman, but who have no intention of having genital surgery". However she does not say where, and she objects to the inclusivist usage of 'transgender'. She plays with the idea of adopting "transposeur", although she never returned to this term. She is also emphatic that she is a "congenital heterosexual" (perhaps having forgotten her claim to be a woman). She re-asserts her objection to the notion of "fetishistic cross-dressing", and asserts again that she is a pioneer of men's liberation.

On the other hand in 1999, in a meeting with Vanessa Foster: "She was bemused by my use (and the community's) of the word transgender, and how the story affixed its authorship to her, even though she'd referred to it as transgenderist as a self-descriptor once she'd moved from occasional crossdressing to living as female, though not transsexual (she was quick to correct that!)".

In 2000 Prince sold four sets of *Transvestia*, photographs and personal papers to Rikki Swin. They were initially in the Rikki Swin Institute in Chicago, and are now at the [University of Victoria](#). Other files and papers were donated to the Special Collections Department at California State University, Northridge.

In 2003, [Michael Bailey's](#) *The Man Who Would Be Queen*, revived the Freund-Blanchard notion of autogynephilia to much alarm and controversy, but still there was no dialectic with the notion of femmiphilia



In 2004, Richard F. Docter, who had become a friend of Prince and the Bulloughs, at the urging of Vern, wrote and self-published his biography of her. Bullough provided a Preface. Unlike her reluctance in Bullough's book a decade earlier, Prince was now willing that her original name of Arnold Lowman, not mentioned outside her inner circle since the court appearance in 1961, should be used. While Docter had developed a 5-part typology in his *Transvestites and Transsexuals*, 1988, he does not locate Prince within it, although in chapter 13 he does discuss Step a: from being a fetishistic cross dresser to being a transgender woman and then Step b: from being a woman in public to having the gender identity of a woman.

From 2005 the so-called [Harry Benjamin Syndrome](#) movement was developed. The European branch had little to say about Virginia Prince: [Charlotte Goiar's](#) *bête noire* is rather [Carla Antonelli](#). The US HBS people following [Diane Kearny](#) set up Prince as that which they are not. It is therefore ironic that in several respects they follow Prince more than they do Benjamin:

- they deny that there is a continuum from transvestite to transsexual
- they disassociate from trans women who pass less well, and whom they regard as fetishistic



Virginia with Richard Docter

- they disassociate from gays and lesbians
- they disassociate from the transgender umbrella

They are also more like Prince than Robert Stoller in talking only of Gender but not Gender Identity.

Vern Bullough died in 2006. In his final book, *Crossing Sexual Boundaries*, co-edited with Ariadne Kane, Bullough still does not use Prince's original name. His take on the term 'transgender' has now altered to: "In fact, Virginia was a main source of the popularization of gender as applied to cross-dressing. She and Ariadne popularized the term *transgender*, which has been a more encompassing term than cross-dresser."

Prince lived till 2009 and the age of 96, lastly in a retirement home in Los Angeles, and according to her friend, Richard Docter, she developed a taste for she-male pornography. She also dabbled in astrophysics and led a discussion group on being and consciousness in her retirement complex. She willed her body to the UCLA medical school. (Hill:39)

1. This is comparable to the way that [Agnes Gonxha](#) (generally known as Mother Teresa) was uncritically treated as a saint after being endorsed by [Malcolm Muggeridge](#).

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1 comment:

 **Unknown** 30/6/15 11:40

I took Photos of Virginia prince around the time of my change .
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A Gender Variance Who's Who

Essays on trans, intersex, cis and other persons and topics from a trans perspective.....All human life is here.

This site is the most comprehensive on the web devoted to trans history and biography. Well over 1400 persons worthy of note, both famous and obscure, are discussed in detail, and many mentioned in passing.

There is a detailed **Index** arranged by vocation, doctor, activist group etc. There is also a **Place Index** arranged by City etc. This is still evolving.

In addition to this most articles have one or more labels at the bottom. Click one to go to similar persons. There is a full list of labels at the bottom of the right-hand sidebar. There is also a search left. Enjoy exploring!

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This and That							

29 March 2013

Virginia Prince: Jargon terms and general comments

"1978, when Kane introduced Prince to the word 'transgender', was early enough that if Prince had had the gumption and the resourcefulness she could have taken the word and made it hers."

Virginia Prince

Part 1 – Youth and First marriage

Bibliography

Part II – Second Marriage

Part III – Femmiphilic activist

Part IV – Full-time Living

Part V – Transgenderist dowager

Jargon terms and general comments

Transgender lexicons:

Virginia Prince

Rose White

Raven Usher


Chris Bartlett

Jack Molay

Raphael Carter

Jargon terms associated with Virginia Prince:

- Transvestite, transvestism – the various forms of transvest* and the French form travest* have been around as noun, verb and adjective for almost 500 years. The Paris police have been issuing **Permissions de Travestissement** since 1800. Magnus Hirschfeld associated the word with eroticism, and psychoanalysts attempted to redefine it as a fetish. Prince cited Hirschfeld's usage as a justification for restricting the word to heterosexual transvestites.
- Femmiphilic, femmepersonator -- these were terms for heterosexual transvestites of the type encouraged to join Tri-ess. Prince coined the terms in 1961 as she knew that her attempted restriction of the word transvestite was not successful, but other members largely kept using transvestite until after 1970 when Prince became more insistent that they not be used. Femmiphilia fell out of use towards the end of the 1980s and was replaced by cross-dressing.
- 'TV-TS' Ekins claims that Prince pioneered this, but gives no citations. TV and TS are the obvious abbreviations for transvestite and transsexual and were almost certainly coined by many unconnected people independently.
- Trangenderal -- a term used by Prince in 1969, but once only.
- Male Woman - a person whose sex is one side of the binary divide and whose gender is the other side and whose sexuality vis-à-vis sex is heterosexual.
- Dual personality expression
- gender is between the ears, not the legs - a phrase that has become popular in recent years, and is not usually attributed to Prince.
- Transgenderist – a variation on transgender which had been picked up by Ariadne Kane around 1978, and copied by Prince in a few articles 1978-9. They used it to mean a Prince-style transvestite who goes full time. Such is a type of what Benjamin called a Non-Surgical Transsexual, but Prince would never admit this. As she had done with 'transvestite' Prince took an existing word and attempted to restrict it to mean only her



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<https://zagria.blogspot.com/2013/03/virginia-prince-jargon-terms-and.html>

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own type. Richard Docter, 1988, and IFGE promoted the idea that Prince coined 'transgenderist', and in 1996, [Feinberg](#) popularized the idea in his *Transgender Warriors*. From that time Prince started claiming that she had coined the term, but sometimes mocked the idea, depending on the audience. Vivian Namaste uses 'transgenderist' in her *Invisible Lives* with no connotation of the Princian usage.

- The Girl Within -- a term coined by Susanna Valenti in the early 1960s. It was taken over with credit by Prince to express what is found in every male, but repressed in most. Neither Valenti nor Prince compare the term to [Ulrichs'](#) *anima muliebris*.
- Transposeur -- a term proposed by Prince in 1997 to replace transgenderist which was being confused with transgender. She never did follow up on this proposal.
- Whole Girl Fetishist -- proposed by Sheila Nile in 1968 for members who did not pass well enough, particularly if it were for lack of trying. Over the next few years it came to be that those who failed or didn't bother to fashion themselves as truly feminine were fetishistic. Susanna even estimated that the majority of members were WGFs.

When to use female pronouns? Wikipedia and Ekins follow the confusing convention that the pronouns of a person's final gender should be retrojected to childhood and even birth. The not-TG people and Patricia Califia - who claim to follow that same convention - somehow deny Prince all female pronouns, some just to Prince and others to all non-op trans women. This is despite the obvious fact that Prince had a female gender identity before puberty. However she did not become a full-time woman until 1968. Like the rest of us, Prince had more than one persona. Much clarity is gained when Arnold, Muriel and Virginia are used to signify which aspect is doing what. Virginia did not do a pharmacology PhD, write *Chemistry in Your Beauty Shop* and marry two wives; Arnold did.

The US state of Virginia has three counties with Prince in the name: Prince Edward, Prince George and Prince William. This does make it difficult to google "Virginia Prince".

In the decades before Stonewall there were silly laws and there were draconian laws. People, gay, trans, lesbian were irritated by those laws, were harassed by them, they were sometimes arrested, less often jailed, and more often lost their jobs. Virginia Prince hobnobbed with the gay and lesbian organizations, with the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis. But she told the members of FPE and she told the police officers that FPE was not not gay, it was not fetishistic, it was not gender variant, and its members did not seek surgical transformation. We are different from people like that. Yes some members of the Mattachine Society were into a similar sense of false respectability, and emphasized that they were not transvestites. But in both cases saying we are different, there is always an unspoken 'jail them, but please not us'.

Was Prince a transvestite activist? Obviously not. I showed this by listing individuals who could be regarded as transvestites who were not supported. [Felicity Chandelle](#) stands out as an exception. Comptons Cafeteria, the Black Cat police riot, [Sir Lady Java](#) -- Prince was not interested. Even [Mauricio Archibald](#), where the charge was identical to that against Felicity, and where an appeal had been secured, Prince was not interested. When she spoke to police officers she always emphasized that her members were different from street transvestites.

Was Prince a transgender activist? Even less so. Non-femmiphilic transvestites were banned from FPE. Also banned were drag queens, all gender queers, all transsexuals, and most non-ops. Prince had transsexual friends. There is no record that she had any transgender friends. Nor did she seek to co-ordinate or ally of her own accord with any transgender groups. IFGE did ally with various types of transgender groups, as did Leslie Feinberg. Feinberg and IFGE used Prince's name in proclaiming transgender umbrellas but Prince continued to write mean-spirited articles complaining about the umbrellas. In short she was transgenderphobic.

The other partner in Cardinal Industries of California is a well-kept secret. I presume that it was a private company, not quoted on the stock exchange. Attempts to google it mainly bring up Cardinal Industries of New York, a toy-making company.

Likewise the list of the original 12 members of the Hose and Heel Club is still a secret 50 odd years later. Are the names not in the papers left to either [Rikki Swin](#) or to Northridge University? Docter tells us that one member was a dress maker and that the second meeting was at his house. Darrell Raynor tells us that Robert Stevens/Barbara Ellen and Evelyn fell out with Prince late 1962 or early 1963. Presumably they were in the original group, but we know nothing about them other than what is in Raynor's book.

It occurs to me that the surviving members of the Alpha Chapter might tell a rather different account, but with the exception of JJ Allen they have not done so. I was able to find so much more about the New York chapter. I can work only from published accounts.

The most remarkable thing about Virginia Prince is that she had dealings with five sexologists: Bowman, Benjamin, Stoller, Bullough and Docter. While each of them disassociated from her published opinions, she did affect, even deform, the writing of Benjamin, Bullough and Docter.

Prince's quest was a quixotic one. She took the example of the femmiphilic and presented it as the ideal type of transvestite person, and that the membership of FPE was the universe of cross dressers. To do this she had to construct three dams of exclusion that were forever disintegrating.

a) Fetishism. Hirschfeld subtitled his 1910 book: *The Transvestites: The Erotic Drive to Cross-Dress*, and Psychoanalysts spent most of the last century developing the idea that transvestism is fetishistic. Quite reasonably Prince reacted against this. In addition, in the early days of *Transvestia* Prince had to be careful or else the magazine would have been banned by the US Post Office. This meant not only excluding discussions of eroticism, but also forced-femininity and petticoat-punishment fantasies. Nan Gilbert, a publisher of petticoat-punishment fantasies had had his mail stopped and was fined \$500 in 1960. So it is certainly intriguing that Issues 1, 2 and 4 of *Transvestia* featured William Bessie Beck, the legendary recipient of petticoat-punishment whose amazing tale has now been [published](#) by Peter Farrer. What should we make of the fiction titles: *From Martin to Marion*, *The Turnabout Party* and *The Birth of Barbara*? They were published by Chevalier Publications, and advertised at the back of *How to be a Woman Though Male*. Amazon lists the author as "Anonymous (Virginia Prince?)". In fact the first draft of most of these fictions were published in *Transvestia*. Then there is Sandy Thomas, apparently a long-time friend of Prince. Thomas is the author of lots and lots of transvestite fiction. In the mid-1990s Prince sold the copyright of her major books and of *Transvestia* to Thomas who has reprinted them on his own imprint and listed them under [his own name](#). Both the original Prince books and the Thomas-authored books are now available together on Lulu.com.

b) Transsexuality. Prince had an initial enthusiasm for transgender surgery, as we saw above. There are rumors that she even applied to be accepted in the Stanford University program (although she had been in Los Angeles earlier at the right time for [Elmer Belt's](#) program at UCLA Medical School). However Prince completely denied that rumor. She decided against surgery, as did [Yvonne Sinclair](#), [Nicole Murray Ramirez](#) and [Leslie Feinberg](#), but of these only Prince then came down heavy on others who were considering surgery (other changebacks who are more like Prince in wanting to ban gender surgery include [Charles Kane](#), [Gerry Leach](#) and [Alan Finch](#)). One of the first to receive this negative message was the teenage [Diane Kearny](#) who naively wrote to Prince and was told that she was 'delusional' in wanting such. Words such as 'mean-spirited' and 'bullying' have been used to describe Prince's antagonism to other people's possible surgery. A typical example was Mary who was Prince's assistant in 1967 and who had originally thought that she would seek surgery. On the other hand, in the period just before Doreen's departure, Prince was friends with Sherry, a post-operative. They would go to dances as two women, and Doreen was stressed that Prince would follow in Sherry's footsteps. In 1979 Prince wrote: "Although I personally try to dissuade people from having the surgery, except in special cases, it is interesting that three of my best girl friends are former men who have had the surgery". Docter (p58) says: "Over the years, Virginia has been very outspoken and dogmatic in her opposition in presenting her opposition to surgical sex reassignment, often going well beyond the simple expression of a personal preference and more into the mode of conducting an ideological campaign. Let's just say she has not shown

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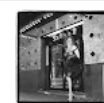
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much acceptance of contrasting opinions on this topic, and it has cost her some friends. But as strong as her views on this may be, she has sustained many close friendships with transgender women who elected to proceed with surgery." Despite her statements, there was a steady loss of FPE-Tri-Ess members to surgery.

c) Homosexuality. In *The Transvestite and His Wife*, Prince wrote "The femmiphile adopts feminine garb as a matter of personal internal expression – the homosexual 'Queen' does so for external effect – to attract males for sexual purposes and to ease the guilt of both." However in conversation Prince, while denying finding men attractive, did admit to enjoying being attractive to and flirting with men. She had a cross-dresser friend who was willing to play the male role and took her for lunch and drinks. Afterward they did mutual masturbation. She found kissing, hugging and affection from a man to be sexually rewarding. Hence we could take the attitude that by her own definition we can take her as a homosexual queen. The fashion in typology has changed since the sixties. Then the emphasis was on behavior; now it is on sex or gender identity. Prince did emphatically reject a gay identity, but if a police officer had encountered Prince and her date they could have been convicted. She insisted that "never once was there any kind of anal or oral sex". There is of course a significant minority of gay men have the same preference, but with a different sexual identity. Suzan Cooke says that she spoke to a male hustler who counted Prince among his customers. That is certainly possible but we need further confirmation.

Like the later HBS movement, Prince would use 'gender' where the context would imply that she meant 'gender identity'. And of course there is something a bit askew about Prince's gender identity. Even as late as the 2000s she insisted that she was heterosexual. It seems that she never accepted the argument that as a heterosexual woman she should be interested in men. Likewise she kept repeating that she was a pioneer of men's lib. If she were a woman with a woman's gender identity then of course she would not be a pioneer of men's lib.

If Muriel were born not in 1912, but in say 1992, where would she be today? Would she have been a transkid on puberty blockers, and completing surgical transition in a gap year before going up to university? Or would she join those who say that it is a violation of the UN statutes against torture to compel trans persons to be sterilized? In none of the source documents is there an explanation of why Prince turned away from wanting surgery.

As TS Eliot famously said: [a bad poet borrows, a good poet steals](#). Actually he did not. What he actually wrote: "*One of the surest tests [of the superiority or inferiority of a poet] is the way in which a poet borrows. Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different than that from which it is torn; the bad poet throws it into something which has no cohesion.*" On this basis Prince is a bad poet. 1978, when Kane introduced Prince to the word 'transgender', was early enough that if Prince had had the gumption and the resourcefulness she could have taken the word and made it hers. To do so would have involved using it more than only three or four times. It would have meant using it regularly and with a force that would have withered the competing usages. Prince was not a major intellect: she was making the same specious claims in 2005 as in 1965; and had not the slightest idea how to weld her theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different than that from which it is torn. Rather she defaced a rich multivalent word, 'transgender', and attempted and failed in her attempt to reduce and narrow it into something quite inauthentic. She threw it into something which has no cohesion.

One can see why Yvonne Cook-Riley and Kimberleigh Richards wanted to credit Prince with something that she never did, and never could have. It is an [irony of note](#) that Diane Kearny, Suzan Cooke, Jenifer Usher and Cathryn Platine all want to support Cook-Riley and Richards in this endeavor.

Time: [22:36](#)



Labels: [femmiphilia](#), [jargon](#), [Lexicon](#)

2 comments:

Anonymous 6/4/13 12:12

Thanks very much for this interesting review of what we might call... "The Prince Phenomenon"?

Still, it's a puzzlement to me; I don't really understand what motivates a person who seeks to stake a claim as "the" representative of a class of people who are somehow "legitimate", and exclude rafts of others who are kinda-sorta the same as merely perverse, or bizarre.

Or maybe I should say I find it difficult to find any "good" motivations for doing so?

And then gaining so much influence over the thinking of professionals... I don't really get why they buy into a prefab one-size-fits-all narrative of this sort, other than the false aura of simplicity it offers...

Do you have any thoughts on this, Zagria?

thanks again,
- bonzie anne

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Zagria 10/4/13 12:58

I think that I have already given my many thoughts on the topic.

How come nobody else has any to say? Now that IFGE has been wound down Prince has lost her major cheer leader, and can slide into the oblivion of history. Yes/no?

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